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THE HARRISBURG FALLOUT

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FIVE YEARS AGO

Week ending April 23, 1974

Last	This Week	Title	Artist
5	1	THE CAT CREPT IN	Mud (Rak)
1	2	SEASONS IN THE SUN	Terry Jacks (Bell)
10	3	REMEMBER YOU'RE A WOMBLE	Wombles (CBS)
21	4	WATERLOO	Abba (CBS)
2	5	ANGEL FACE	Glitter Band (Bell)
6	6	YOU ARE EVERYTHING	Diana Ross & Marvin Gaye (Tamla Motown)
9	7	DOCTORS ORDERS	Sunny (CBS)
3	8	EVERYDAY	Slade (Polydor)
14	9	HOMELY GIRL	Chi-Lites (Bruswick)
16	10	A WALKIN' MIRACLE	Limmie & The Family Cookin' (Avco)

TEN YEARS AGO

Week ending April 23, 1969

Last	This Week	Title	Artist
1	1	THE ISRAELITES	Desmond Dekker (Pyramid)
7	2	GOODBYE	Mary Hopkin (Apple)
–	3	GET BACK	Beatles (Apple)
2	4	I HEARD IT THROUGH THE GRAPEVINE	Marvin Gaye (Tamla Motown)
3	5	GENTLE ON MY MIND	Dean Martin (Reprise)
10	6	PINBALL WIZARD	Who (Track)
4	7	BOOM-BANG A BANG	Lulu (Columbia)
5	8	THE BAD OLD DAYS	Foundations (Pye)
18	9	CUPID	Johnny Nash (Major Minor)
23	10	COME BACK AND SHAKE ME	Clodagh Rodgers (RCA)

15 YEARS AGO

Week ending April 24, 1964

Last	This Week	Title	Artist
2	1	A WORLD WITHOUT LOVE	Peter & Gordon (Columbia)
3	2	I BELIEVE	Bachelors (Decca)
8	3	DON'T THROW YOUR LOVE AWAY	Searchers (Pye)
1	3	CAN'T BUY ME LOVE	Beatles (Parlophone)
6	5	MY BOY LOLLIPOP	Millie (Fontana)
7	6	I LOVE YOU BECAUSE	Jim Reeves (RCA)
5	7	TELL ME WHEN	Applejacks (Decca)
11	8	MOVE OVER DARLING	Doris Day (CBS)
4	9	LITTLE CHILDREN	Billy J. Kramer (Parlophone)
14	10	MOCKING BIRD HILL	Migil Five (Pye)

CHARTS

SINGLES

Week ending April 21, 1979

This	Last Week	Title / Artist	Weeks in chart	Highest position
1	(1)	BRIGHT EYES — Art Garfunkel (CBS)	4	1
2	(4)	COOL FOR CATS — Squeeze (A & M)	4	2
3	(6)	SOME GIRLS — Racey (RAK)	3	3
4	(8)	HE'S THE GREATEST DANCER — Sister Sledge (Atlantic)	3	4
5	(10)	SILLY THING/WHO KILLED BAMBI — Sex Pistols (Virgin)	2	5
6	(2)	I WILL SURVIVE — Gloria Gaynor (Polydor)	11	1
7	(14)	SHAKE YOUR BODY — Jacksons (Epic)	3	7
8	(16)	THE RUNNER — Three Degrees (Ariola)	3	8
9	(3)	IN THE NAVY — Village People (Mercury)	5	1
10	(7)	SULTANS OF SWING — Dire Straits (Vertigo)	6	7
11	(5)	I WANT YOUR LOVE — Chic (Atlantic)	8	3
12	(9)	SOMETHING ELSE — Sex Pistols (Virgin)	7	4
13	(19)	STRANGE TOWN — Jam (Polydor)	5	13
14	(22)	WOW — Kate Bush (EMI)	4	14
15	(17)	I DON'T WANNA LOSE YOU — Kandidate (RAK)	2	15
16	(29)	THE LOGICAL SONG — Supertramp (A&M)	3	16
17	(—)	QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS — Sham 69 (Polydor)	2	17
18	(24)	GOODNIGHT TONIGHT — Wings Parlophone)	2	18
19	(12)	TURN THE MUSIC UP — Players Association (Vanguard)	6	8
20	(23)	DON'T STOP ME NOW — Queen (EMI)	8	11
21	(—)	POP MUZIK — M (MCA)	1	21
22	(11)	LUCKY NUMBER — Lene Lovich (Stiff)	8	2
23	(—)	REMEMBER THEN — Showaddywaddy (Arista)	1	23
24	(—)	VALLEY OF THE DOLLS — Generation X (Chrysalis)	1	24
25	(15)	OLIVER'S ARMY — Elvis Costello (Radar)	10	1
26	(—)	HALLELUJAH — Milk & Honey (Polydor)	1	26
27	(—)	LOVE YOU INSIDE OUT — Bee Gees (RSO)	1	27
28	(25)	FOREVER IN BLUE JEANS — Neil Diamond (CBS)	6	19
29	(—)	JUST WHAT I NEEDED — Cars (Elektra)	3	24
30	(26)	WAITING FOR AN ALIBI — Thin Lizzy (Vertigo)	6	7

BUBBLING UNDER . . .

HAVEN'T STOPPED DANCING DANCING YET — Gonzalez (Sidewalk); KNOCK ON WOOD — Amii Stewart (Atlantic/Hansa); OFFSHORE BANKING BUSINESS — Members (Virgin); LOVE BALLAD — George Benson (Warner Bros).

ALBUMS

Week ending April 21, 1979

This	Last Week	Title / Artist	Weeks in chart	Highest position
1	(1)	BARBRA STREISAND'S GREATEST HITS VOL 2 — Barbra Streisand (CBS)	6	1
2	(6)	THE VERY BEST OF LEO SAYER — Leo Sayer (Chrysalis)	3	2
3	(3)	C'EST CHIC — Chic (Atlantic)	11	1
4	(5)	DIRE STRAITS — Dire Straits (Vertigo)	7	4
5	(4)	MANILOW MAGIC — Barry Manilow (Arista)	7	2
6	(8)	SPIRITS HAVING FLOWN — Bee Gees (RSO)	11	1
7	(7)	PARALLEL LINES — Blondie (Chrysalis)	3	2
8	(9)	THE GREAT ROCK 'N' ROLL SWINDLE — Sex Pistols (Virgin)	7	5
9	(2)	BREAKFAST IN AMERICA — Supertramp (A & M)	4	2
10	(15)	LIONHEART — Kate Bush (EMI)	12	10
11	(13)	COUNTRY PORTRAITS — Various (Warwick)	2	11
12	(10)	ARMED FORCES — Elvis Costello (Radar)	14	2
13	(30)	DISCO INFERNO — Various (K-Tel)	2	13
14	(17)	MARTY ROBBINS COLLECTION — Marty Robbins (Lotus)	10	5
15	(14)	MANIFESTO — Roxy Music (Polydor)	4	14
16	(18)	FEEL NO FRET — Average White Band (RCA)	5	16
17	(26)	THE BEST OF EARTH WIND AND FIRE VOL 1 — (CBS)	15	5
18	(19)	BAT OUT OF HELL — Meat Loaf (Epic)	32	6
19	(16)	20 GREATEST HITS — Three Degrees (Epic)	8	9
20	(29)	IMPERIAL WIZARD — David Essex (Mercury)	2	20
21	(25)	COUNTRY LIFE — Various (EMI)	2	21
22	(28)	TURN THE MUSIC UP — Players Association (Vanguard)	6	18
23	(—)	SECOND HAND DAYLIGHT — Magazine (Virgin)	1	23
24	(11)	DESOLATION ANGELS — Bad Company (Swansong)	5	11
25	(27)	VAN HALEN II — Van Halen (Warner Bros)	2	25
26	(23)	SQUEEZING OUT SPARKS — Graham Parker & The Rumour (Vertigo)	2	23
27	(—)	CARS — Cars (Elektra)	2	27
28	(—)	THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING DICKIES — Dickies (A&M)	7	19
29	(10)	52nd STREET — Billy Joel (CBS)	13	10
30	(20)	TRB TWO — Tom Robinson Band (EMI)	5	20

BUBBLING UNDER . . .

LAST THE WHOLE NIGHT LONG — James Last (Polydor); FATE FOR BREAKFAST — Art Garfunkel (CBS); GLADYS KNIGHT — Gladys Knight (CBS); LIGHT ALBUM — Beach Boys (Caribou).

U.S. SINGLES

Week ending April 21, 1979

This	Last Week	Title	Artist
1	(3)	KNOCK ON WOOD	Amii Stewart
2	(2)	MUSIC BOX DANCER	Frank Mills
3	(1)	WHAT A FOOL BELIEVES	Doobie Brothers
4	(6)	HEART OF GLASS	Blondie
5	(10)	REUNITED	Peaches and Herb
6	(9)	STUMBLIN' IN	Suzi Quatro/Chris Norman
7	(4)	TRAGEDY	Bee Gees
8	(7)	I WILL SURVIVE	Gloria Gaynor
9	(18)	IN THE NAVY	Village People
10	(12)	I WANT YOUR LOVE	Chic
11	(11)	I JUST FALL IN LOVE AGAIN	Anne Murray
12	(14)	HE'S THE GREATEST DANCER	Sister Sledge
13	(15)	SHAKE YOUR BODY (DOWN TO THE GROUND)	The Jacksons
14	(19)	GOODNIGHT TONIGHT	Wings
15	(5)	SULTANS OF SWING	Dire Straits
16	(16)	LIVIN' IT UP (FRIDAY NIGHT)	Bell & James
17	(21)	LOVE BALLAD	George Benson
18	(20)	PRECIOUS LOVE	Bob Welch
19	(24)	BLOW AWAY	George Harrison
20	(23)	TAKE ME HOME	Cher
21	(8)	DO YA THINK I'M SEXY	Rod Stewart
22	(13)	LADY	Little River Band
23	(29)	LOVE IS THE ANSWER	England Dan & John Ford Coley
24	(27)	I GOT MY MIND MADE UP	Instant Funk
25	(17)	EVERY TIME I THINK OF YOU	The Babys
26	(22)	CRAZY LOVE	Poco
27	(—)	LOVE TAKES TIME	The Orleans
28	(25)	SHAKE YOUR GROOVE THING	Peaches and Herb
29	(—)	SUCH A WOMAN	Tycoon
30	(—)	JUST WHEN I NEEDED YOU MOST	Randy van Warmer

Courtesy "CASH BOX"

U.S. ALBUMS

Week ending April 21, 1979

This	Last Week	Title	Artist
1	(1)	SPIRITS HAVING FLOWN	Bee Gees
2	(2)	MINUTE BY MINUTE	Doobie Brothers
3	(3)	DIRE STRAITS	Dire Straits
4	(5)	2 HOT!	Peaches and Herb
5	(7)	DESOLATION ANGELS	Bad Company
6	(6)	LIVIN' INSIDE YOUR LOVE	George Benson
7	(11)	BREAKFAST IN AMERICA	Supertramp
8	(8)	ENLIGHTENED ROGUES	Allman Brothers Band
9	(4)	BLONDES HAVE MORE FUN	Rod Stewart
10	(9)	52nd STREET	Billy Joel
11	(14)	PARALLEL LINES	Blondie
12	(12)	GEORGE HARRISON	George Harrison
13	(10)	AT THE BUDOKAN	Cheap Trick
14	(—)	GO WEST	Village People
15	(15)	DESTINY	The Jacksons
16	(19)	WE ARE FAMILY	Sister Sledge
17	(18)	LEGEND	Poco
18	(13)	BRIEFCASE FULL OF BLUES	Blues Brothers
19	(17)	LOVE TRACKS	Gloria Gaynor
20	(23)	INSTANT FUNK	Instant Funk
21	(22)	THE CARS	The Cars
22	(20)	CRUISIN'	Village People
23	(—)	VAN HALEN II	Van Halen
24	(28)	KNOCK ON WOOD	Amii Stewart
25	(30)	OUTLANDOS D'AMOUR	The Police
26	(21)	C'EST CHIC	Chic
27	(—)	EVOLUTION	Journey
28	(16)	THREE HEARTS	Bob Welch
29	(—)	SHEIK YERBOUTI	Frank Zappa
30	(—)	MUSIC BOX DANCER	Frank Mills

Courtesy "CASH BOX"

Dickies tour now lined up

THE DICKIES, whose British tour plans were revealed three weeks ago, have now been confirmed for over 20 dates — starting at the end of next week and continuing until late May — and it's likely that several more will be added.

The tour follows the chart success of their A&M album 'The Incredible Shrinking Dickies', and aids promotion of their newly-released three-track single 'Banana Split' — on yellow vinyl, natch!

Dates are Birmingham Barbarella's (April 26), Wolverhampton Lafayette (27), London Kensington Nashville (28), Malvern Winter Gardens (30), Cheltenham Technical College (May 2), Manchester Ardri Cinema (3), Hull The Block (4), Exeter Routes (7), Plymouth Woods (8), Newport Stowaway (9), Nottingham Sandpiper (11), Leeds Polytechnic (12), Blackburn King George's Hall (13), York Pop Club (14), Middlesbrough Rock Garden (15), Bradford St George's Hall (18), two shows at Liverpool Eric's (19), Bristol Locarno (22), Sheffield Top Rank (23), Newcastle Mayfair (24) and Edinburgh Clouds (25).

The band are insisting on ticket prices being kept to an absolute minimum — which, in fact, is £1 (in advance) and £1.25 (on the doors) throughout the tour.

To tie in with the tour, Warner Brothers release the band's new album 'Azure d'or' on May 4. It contains ten original tracks, including their new single 'Winter Tree', which was issued last week.

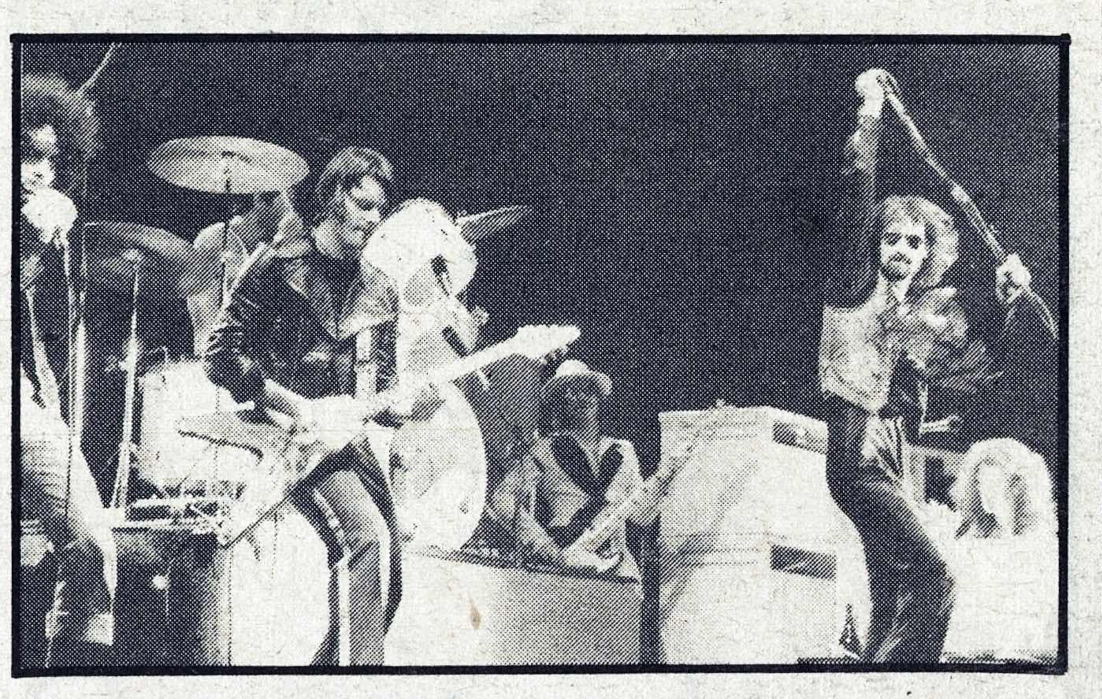
UPCOMING POLICE TOUR

THE POLICE, currently making a sizeable impact on the U.S. charts with both their LP 'Outlandos D'Amour' and single 'Roxanne', will be taking time off from their American commitments to headline a three-week British tour — it starts on May 28, and details will be announced in a week or two. They'll be supported by The Resistance who, beforehand, have dates at London Kensington Nashville with Punishment Of Luxury (this Friday and Saturday), London Islington Hope and Anchor (April 29) and York University (May 3).

J. GEILS IN ONE-OFF

J. GEILS BAND fly in early next month to headline a one-off concert at London Hammersmith Odeon on Thursday, May 3. It's their first London show since they appeared at the old Sundown Theatre in Edmonton back in 1972 — and this will be their only date in Britain this year. The gig is promoted by Straight Music, and tickets are on sale now priced £3.50, £3 and £2.50. Support act is expected to be Lew Lewis Reformer.

The Geils outfit will be featuring tracks from their latest album 'Sanctuary', issued by EMI International earlier this year, and it's likely that a new single will be culled from that LP for rush release. Line-up of the band hasn't changed much in recent years — it now comprises Peter Wolf (vocals), Seth Justman (keyboards and vocals), Magic Dick (harmonica), J Geils (guitar and vocals), Daniel Klein (bass) and Stephen Bladd (drums and vocals).



Burnel finds London venue

JEAN JACQUES BURNEL — whose projected April 30 concert at London's Drury Lane Theatre Royal was banned last week after the venue's owners discovered that he was a member of The Stranglers — has now found another venue at which to perform in the capital. His re-arranged concert is on Tuesday, May 1, at the Hammersmith Odeon — which, in rock terms, is probably of greater prestige than Drury Lane.

After the original concert was called off, attempts were made to book Burnel into the Lyceum, but there was difficulty in finding a suitable available date. But then Hammersmith came to the rescue. Tickets are on sale now priced £3, £2.50 and £2 — from the theatre, promoter Harvey Goldsmith's two box-offices and the usual agencies.

With Burnel will be his backing band for the tour — Peter Howells (drums), Lew Lewis (harp), ex-Vibrator John Ellis (guitar) and Penny Tobin (keyboards) — and the two support bands, Blood Donor and Rapid Eye Movement. We are also promised a number of 'surprises' at the London gig!

NEWS DESK

Ron Wood plans dates in Britain

WITH THE Rolling Stones still dithering about their future plans, Ron Wood is pressing ahead with his own American tour, which starts next week (April 24) and continues until mid-May. And according to latest reports, there's now every indication that he will continue with his solo activities for some time thereafter. It's understood that he now intends to play a series of British dates after his U.S. commitments are completed.

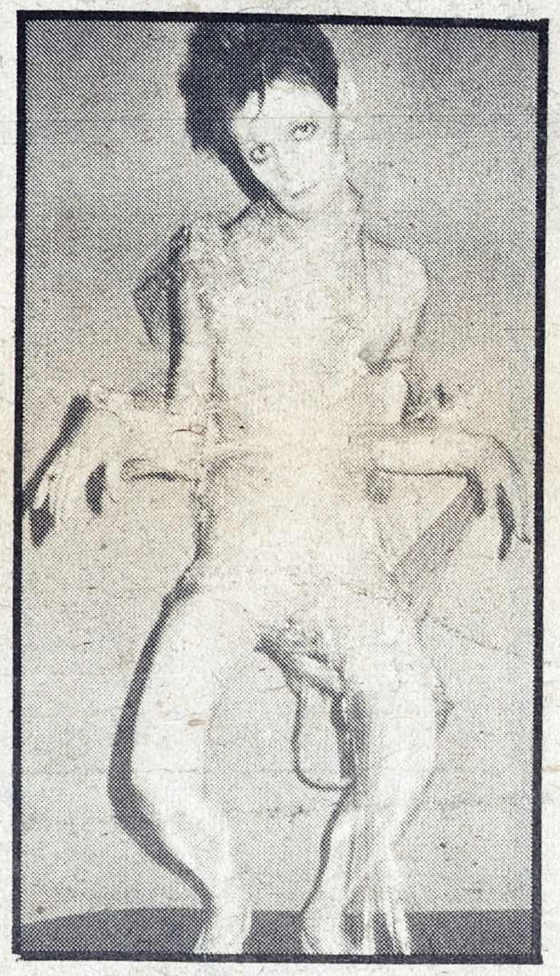
Despite numerous names being bandied around speculatively in some papers, at press-time there was still no official announcement of the line-up of his backing band for the U.S. dates, which are being billed as 'The New Barbarians Tour'. But it seems both likely and logical that, by way of a warm-up, he will play in Keith Richards' two charity shows at Toronto Varsity Hall this Sunday (22).

Wood's third solo album, but his first for the CBS label, comes out on May 11. Titled 'Gimme Some Neck', it features an all-star backing including the rest of the Stones, Mick Fleetwood, Ian McLagan, Dave Mason, Jim Keltner and Bobby Keys. Nine of the 11 tracks were penned by Wood, one of the others being an exclusively written Bob Dylan song 'Seven Days'.

Duffo's mad gigs

DUFFO, Australia's cellophane-wrapped weirdo, begins his first headlining UK concert series next month. Under the banner of 'The Tour Of Madness', he plays nine dates including a major London appearance. And the outing ties in with the May 11 release of his new Beggar's Banquet single 'The Power Of Madness'.

Together with his backing band, Duffo visits Birmingham Digbeth Civic Hall (May 23), Redcar Coatham Bowl (24), Glasgow City Hall (25), Edinburgh Lyceum (27), Preston Polytechnic (28), Manchester Lesser Free Trade Hall (29), Bingley Arts Centre (30), Loughborough University (31) and London Kingsway Royalty Theatre (June 3). It's likely that one or two more gigs will be added.



Soft Boys open two-month trek

THE SOFT BOYS set out on a massive tour this weekend, coinciding with the release of their debut album 'A Can Of Bees' on their own Two Crabs label. The tour runs for two months, and they have so far confirmed 29 dates, with about a dozen more still being finalised.

Gigs set so far are Bath Brillig Arts Centre (this Saturday), London West Hampstead Moonlight Club (April 24), Hull College (26), Norwich East Anglia University (27), Birmingham Bournebrook Hotel (28), Canterbury Art College (May 1), Scarborough Penthouse (4), Huddersfield Polytechnic (8), Reading University (9), Portsmouth Polytechnic (10), Coventry Warwick University (12), Swansea Circles (14), Bournemouth Maison Royale (15), Plymouth Woods (16), Exeter Routes (17), Newcastle Polytechnic (20), Scunthorpe Tiffany's (22), Blackpool Norbreck Castle (23), Stoke North Staffs Polytechnic (24), Nottingham Sandpiper (25), Cheltenham Whitcombe Lodge (26), Swindon Brunel Rooms (29), Carlisle Wigcombe Market Hall (June 1), London Kensington Nashville (2), Birmingham Barbarella's (5), High Wycombe Nags Head (7), Bristol Polytechnic (9), Newport Stowaway (13) and Bradford University (14).

The Nashville gig on June 2 is to be recorded, with a view to future release. Meanwhile, the 'Can Of Bees' LP — a part studio, part live recording — will be distributed by Rough Trade, Bonaparte, Small Wonder and other independent outlets. A double A-side single by The Soft Boys will follow shortly.

Blondie promise a September tour

BLONDIE now plan to tour Britain in September, their mentor and spokesman Chris Stein told NME at the weekend. He said they regretted that they had been unable to play any dates on their current brief European visit, even though April concerts in the UK were mooted early in the year — "but we really have to get back to the States and concentrate our efforts on the new album".

They are due to fly back to New York from Italy tomorrow (Friday), and then go straight into the studio for a solid six weeks' work on the LP — which is tentatively titled 'Eat The Beat', and contains a contrasting range of material from disco to a Kraftwerk-type track.

With their records at last taking off in America, they'll be doing some promotion work and playing some dates in the States during the summer. But Stein says they are all very conscious of the fact that Britain is where it all started for them, and he is optimistic about the September visit. Their British representative estimates they will play about 15 dates at that time.

Meanwhile, a new Blondie single is released by Chrysalis on May 4. It is 'Sunday Girl' coupled with 'I Know But I Don't Know', both from the chart-topping album 'Parallel Lines'. There is also a limited edition 12-inch version, on which there's an additional track — 'Sunday Girl' sung in French!

SPRINGSTEEN IN OCTOBER?

IT NOW LOOKS as though Bruce Springsteen will be coming to Britain this year after all — but not until the early autumn. His on-off visit has already taken a number of twists in recent weeks — it was originally expected that he would be coming over at about this time, then it was announced that his tour had been delayed until June, only to be followed by the news that he wasn't coming to Britain at all in 1979, and hadn't even made up his mind about a 1980 visit.

But the official word from Springsteen's management last week is that he is now planning to come here in late September or October. They added that two offers had been received for him to appear in major UK open-air events during the summer — but although these offers haven't been rejected out of hand, it's felt more likely that he will wait until the later date, as evidently he is none too keen on all-star outdoor shows.

Springsteen is currently working with the E-Street Band on his fifth studio album, but it seems probable that this already-recorded live LP will be the first to be issued — if only to help overcome the problem of being one of the most-bootlegged artists of the present day.

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RECORD NEWS

Bowie album tracks

DAVID BOWIE'S new album, titled 'The Lodger,' is scheduled for May 25 release by RCA. It consists of ten new songs — **Fantastic Voyage, African Night Flight, Move On, Yassassin, Red Sails, D.J., Look Back In Anger, Boys Keep Swinging, Repetition** and **Red Money.** Two of the tracks, 'Boys Keep Swinging' and 'Fantastic Voyage' are issued on April 27 as a single. Musicians featured on the LP, which was produced by Tony Visconti, are Brian Eno and Roger Powell (synthesisers and assorted odds'n'sods), Carlos Alomar and Adrian Belew (guitars), Sean Mayes (keyboards), Simon Hans (keyboards), George Murray (bass) and Dennis Davis (drums). This week, Bowie is filming a spot for the 'Kenny Everett Video Show,' performing the A-side of the single.

Rod's latest

ROD STEWART has another single out on Riva Records tomorrow (Friday). It's a double A-side release, coupling the title track from his album 'Blondes Have More Fun' and another song from the same LP 'Best Days Of My Life.'

Beatles & Bolan elpee releases

THE BEATLES' album 'Hey Jude', so far unavailable in this country, is released this week by EMI — and so brings the Beatles catalogue up to date. Titles on the LP (price £4.40) are **Can't Buy Me Love, I Should Have Known Better, Paperback Writer, Rain, Lady Madonna, Revolution, Hey Jude, Old Brown Shoes, Don't Let Me Down** and **Ballad Of John & Yoko**. Issued on May 4 in EMI's mid-price range (£2.85) is a compilation album featuring 16 of the best-known tracks by the late Marc Bolan, titled 'Solid Gold'.

● **Elton John's** new single, issued by Rocket on May 3 in a picture sleeve, is a three-track maxi titled 'The Thom Bell Sessions '77'. The songs featured are 'Are You Ready For Love', 'Three Way Love Affair' and 'Mama Can't Buy You Love', all recorded in Seattle in 1977 with Thom Bell producing. The record is only available as a 12-inch.

● The final single from **Alternative TV** is released on the independent Deptford Fun City label on April 27. As reported last week, the band have changed their name to **The Good Missionaries** and are about to tour with The Pop Group. Under their new name, they'll be starting work on an album in May.

● One of the best value-for-money buys this month must be the new K-Tel compilation 'Hi-Energy' comprising 20 current or recent hits by the original artists. Among those featured are **Ian Dury, Dennis Brown, Frankie Miller, Darts, Violinski, The Skids, The Members, Generation X** and **Lene Lovich**. Retail price is £4.49.

● Latest single from **Nazareth,** rushed out by Mountain this week to coincide with the band's return from their six-week American tour, is 'Whatever You Want Babe.'

● The new **Sylvester** album 'Stars', released by Fantasy on May 11, contains eight tracks — as opposed to only four on the American LP. It is also to be the subject of a massive promotion and TV advertising campaign.

● **Gallagher and Lyle** have left A&M Records and moved to Phonogram who, in turn, have parted company with **Bethnal.**

● **Elkie Brooks** goes into the studios at the end of this month to start work on her new album, which is being produced by Barry Blue.

● **The Tubes'** new single 'Prime Time', issued by A&M tomorrow (Friday) and taken from their current album 'Remote Control', will be available in four different coloured vinyls — blue, red, yellow and green.

● Coventry-based three-piece **X-Certs** have been signed by Midlands label Zama Records, and are putting the finishing touches to their debut single 'Feeling In The Groove'.

● The **Billy Preston-Syreeta** single 'Go To It', reported last week, will not only be a 12-inch but also Motown's first coloured vinyl release — in brown. It's out this weekend, and is followed on May 11 by the soundtrack album from the film 'Fast Break' for which the duo performed the music.

● 'Arsenal We're Right Behind You' is a tribute to the London club's second successive Wembley appearance. Attributed to **Northbank,** which cloaks the identity of many top session men, it's out this week on Robot Records.

● Graham Parker's band **The Rumour** have a single titled 'Emotional Traffic' issued by Stiff on April 27 — with the first 15,000 copies available in either red, amber or green vinyl.

● The **Red Noise** single 'Revolt Into Style' is available from this weekend on EMI in a limited edition of 25,000 12-inch copies, which contain two live tracks on the B-side — 'Out Of Touch' and 'Stay Young'.

● **Linda Lewis** has been signed to a long-term worldwide deal by Ariola Records and her first single for the label is out this week, titled 'I'd Be Surprisingly Good For You'. She is now working on an album with producer Mike Batt.

● The new **Abba** single, issued by Epic on April 27, is 'Does Your Mother Know?'. It's taken from their album 'Voulez-Vous', due out on May 4.

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CLASH: FOUR ODDS'N'SODS

AN UNUSUAL four-track EP by The Clash, called 'The Cost Of Living', is released by CBS on May 11 — featuring material previously unavailable on their albums or singles. It comes in a four-colour gatefold sleeve, with a two-colour inner bag and a special label, and sells at £1.49.

First track is the Bobby Fuller classic 'I Fought The Law', which the band have been playing live for six months, it now being one of their most popular stage numbers. The next two songs, 'Groovy Times' and 'Gates Of The West' (both Strummer-Jones compositions), were recorded during the 'Give 'Em Enough Rope' sessions — but omitted from that album because they were different in style from the rest of the LP tracks.

Final item is a totally re-recorded version of 'Capital Radio', previously only available on a fab NME promo EP, which has now become a collectors item and is changing hands for (at least!) £20 per copy. As a bonus, the EP ends with a 30-second live jingle version of 'I Fought The Law'.

● **Rest of the Record News, page 4.**

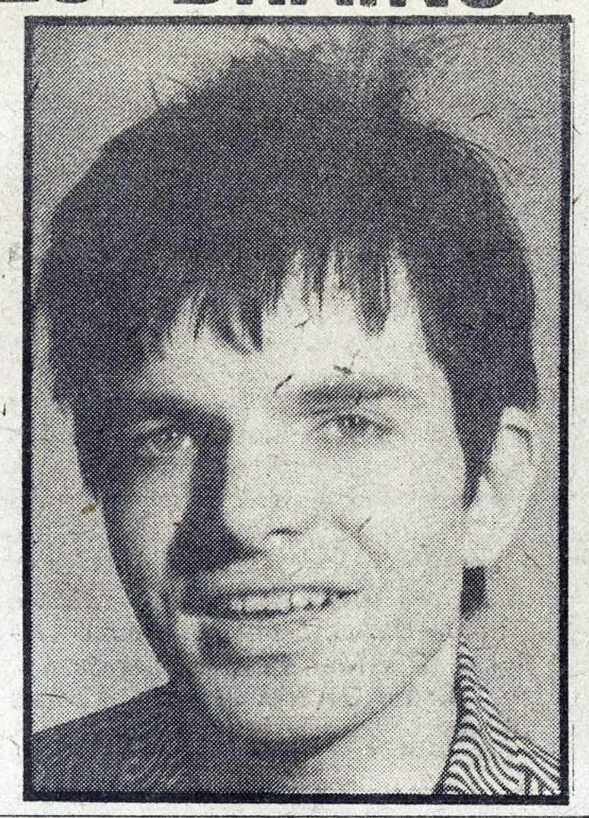
BUZZARDS CIRCLE

THE LEYTON BUZZARDS go on tour next month, coinciding with the release of their new Chrysalis single on May 4 — titled 'I'm Hanging Around', it has two tracks on the B-side ('I Don't Want To Go To Art School' and 'No Dry Ice Or Flying Pigs'), and is available in a limited edition of fluorescent green vinyl. As previously reported, they guest with The Only Ones at London Rainbow on April 28, and thereafter play the following dates in their own right:

Hatfield Polytechnic (May 11), Birmingham Barbarella's (15), Wolverhampton Lafayette (18), Cheltenham Whitcombe Lodge (19), Middlesbrough Teesside Polytechnic (21), York Buzz Club (23), London Camden Music Machine (24), Newport The Village (25), Dudley J.B.'s (26), Norwich Boogie House (27), Chester Smartyz (28), Cardiff Granny's (29), Newport Stowaway (30), Weston-super-Mare Sloopy's (31), Blackpool Norbreck Castle (June 1), Leeds Fforde Green Hotel (2), Derby Ajanta Club (7), Liverpool Eric's (8) and Cromer West Runton Pavilion (9). More dates are likely to be added.

THE MEMBERS, who begin their headlining UK tour this week, have had to replace bassist Chris Payne for the first part of the itinerary. He is suffering from a recurrence of the nervous exhaustion that caused him to miss a few gigs on the band's last tour, and Paul Gray of The Hot Rods is standing in for him for the time being. The band have added another date to their schedule — at Chester Smartyz on May 21.

BRIAN JAMES' BRAINS



BRIAN JAMES former leader of The Damned, is now fronting a new flexible outfit which is to be called Brian James & The Brains. He's being cagey about the personnel because, he says, "I shall be using different brains for different venues."

He plans a series of gigs next month, opening at London Kensington Nashville on May 1, and in the initial stages the line-up includes Police drummer Stuart Copeland.

James has a three-track single — comprising 'Ain't That A Shame', 'Living In Sin' and 'I Can Make You Cry' — released on his own B.J. Records label (distributed by Step Forward) on April 27.

Rainbow net Glover

ROGER GLOVER, bassist with Deep Purple until he left that band in 1973, has now joined Ritchie Blackmore's Rainbow — and is already working with them in France on their new album. The outfit is still lacking a singer and a keyboards player, but both vacancies are now down to a short list, and names of the new members will be revealed shortly. This finally squashes all rumours of a Rainbow split and, in fact, the band say they are about to announce their plans for the rest of 1979 — which are expected to include a British tour.

Rock at Twickers?

TWICKENHAM, the headquarters of Rugby Union in England, could become a regular venue for rock concerts — if some members of the RFU Committee have their way. At a delegation meeting last weekend, means of keeping Twickenham solvent were discussed. It was pointed out that it is only used for two or three major international matches every season, and its 40 acres are standing idle for much of the time.

The suggestion for using the ground for concerts came from Buckinghamshire RFU secretary Peter Trunkfield, who said: "Let's have them at Twickenham every night in the summer if it means more money coming in." A sub-committee is to investigate the feasibility of the plan and, as an experiment, offers may be invited for a trial concert this summer.

ANNIE HASLAM of Renaissance

RENAISSANCE REACTIVATED

RENAISSANCE have now re-scheduled their spring tour, originally planned for this month but subsequently postponed. The April itinerary was to have taken in just five major venues, but this has now been expanded into a string of 11 concerts in May. The revised date sheet, promoted by Harvey Goldsmith and opening with a big London show, comprises:

London Hammersmith Odeon (May 11), Southampton Gaumont (12), Croydon Fairfield Hall (13), Birmingham Odeon (15), Liverpool Empire (16), Sheffield City Hall (17), Edinburgh Odeon (19), Manchester Apollo (20), Derby Assembly Rooms (22), Brighton Dome (23) and Bristol Colston Hall (25).

Tickets are on sale now at all venues. For the London show they cost £3.75, £3.25 and £2.75 (also available at Goldsmith's two box-offices); elsewhere prices are £3.25, £2.75 and £2.25.

● Fairport Convention, whose farewell tour dates (prior to their disbandment) were reported two weeks ago, will now kick off their itinerary with a major London concert. It's at Drury Lane Theatre on Saturday, April 28, and tickets are on sale now priced £4, £3.50, £3 and £2.

County's gigs

WAYNE COUNTY & The Electric Chairs have now confirmed several more dates for their spring UK tour which, as reported last week, opens at Leicester University this Saturday (21). Newly confirmed are London Camden Music Machine (April 27), Birmingham Barbarella's (May 1), Newport Stowaway (2), Liverpool Eric's (4), Nottingham Sandpiper (5) and Rayleigh Crocs (9). At least ten more gigs are still being finalised, running through to May 26 and including two or three in Scotland.

The new County album 'Things Your Mother Never Told You,' released by Safari Records on May 4, features ex-Snatch singer Pat Palladin on backing vocals on several tracks — and she will also be joining the band for their Music Machine gig. Pat and Wayne are currently discussing the possibility of recording a single together.

THE TOURISTS play their only solo London date at Camden Music Machine on April 28, prior to going on the road as support act in Roxy Music's comeback tour.

NEWS IN BRIEF

BOBBY HENRY, whose new single 'Soho Side Show' is released early next month by A&M Records, has London gigs at Islington Hope & Anchor (April 23 and 30), West Hampstead Moonlight Club (25) and the Marquee (28).

THE TUBES, whose British tour opens on May 11, stop off in London next week on their way to Europe. They're filming a sequence for BBC-2's 'Old Grey Whistle Test', scheduled for screening next Tuesday (24), with a repeat the following Sunday.

NATALIE COLE will now play only one night at London Drury Lane Theatre Royal on April 27, instead of the two originally planned. People with tickets for the April 26 cancelled show will, instead, be able to attend the following night.

MADDY PRIOR is principal vocalist in Mike Oldfield's series of British concerts, starting this weekend (see Gig Guide). The 45-piece orchestra also includes Gong stalwart Pierre Moerlen.

INNER CIRCLE, just back from a short European tour, are playing more dates to promote their current Island single 'Stop Breaking My Heart' — Manchester Ardri Cinema (tonight, Thursday), London Noriek Club (Saturday), Brighton Top Rank (April 24), Liverpool Eric's (27), Huddersfield Polytechnic (28), Bristol Locarno (29) and Nottingham Playhouse (30).

ELVIS PRESLEY Memorial Show 1979 will be staged at Watford Town Hall on August 16, the second anniversary of his death. The event includes disco, live acts, stalls and competitions. Tickets priced £2.50 are available from Reb-Levy Management, P.O. Box 142, Watford, Herts. WD1 1NP.

JUDAS PRIEST have added a second night at Sheffield City Hall on May 26 to their upcoming UK tour, their show at that venue the previous night having sold out. Support act for the whole tour has just been announced as Marseille.

DOWNLINERS SECT, Some Chicken and The Now are going on tour together in June, as a package of bands affiliated to the Raw Records label. Dates are being confirmed and will be announced shortly for the tour, billed as the 'Raw Road Show.'

MOTHER'S FINEST have postponed their concert at London Rainbow, planned for tomorrow (Friday), for four weeks until May 18. It now becomes the final date of their European tour, and ties in with the May 11 release of their new Epic album 'Mother Factor'.

ADAM & THE ANTS are the latest act to be booked for a headline appearance at London Strand Lyceum Ballroom. It's this coming Sunday (22), and the support acts are Essential Logic and The Ruts. Admission is £2.50.

RADIO STARS are supporting Penetration on the opening section of their UK tour, announced two weeks ago — from tomorrow (Friday) until May 10. They then have gigs in their own right at Rayleigh Crocs (May 16), London Kensington Nashville (17) and London City University (18).

GAFFA, Medium Medium and Art Failure are three Nottingham bands who are trying to bring themselves to the attention of London agents and bookers by playing their own concert in the capital. It's at the Acklam Hall, W.10 tonight (Thursday).

Rachel sets out

RACHEL SWEET plays her first British dates next month since her appearances with the 1978 'Be Stiff' package tour. They are Guildford Civic Hall (May 1), Newcastle Polytechnic (2), Edinburgh Astoria (3), Sheffield Polytechnic (4), Norwich East Anglia University (5), Walsall Town Hall (7), Loughborough Town Hall (9), London Kensington Nashville (10) and Uxbridge Brunel University (11). A special backing band, to be known as The Escorts, is being formed for these dates — line-up to be announced shortly. The Sports are the support act at Guildford, with Lew Lewis taking over for all the other dates except London and Uxbridge, for which a support has yet to be named.

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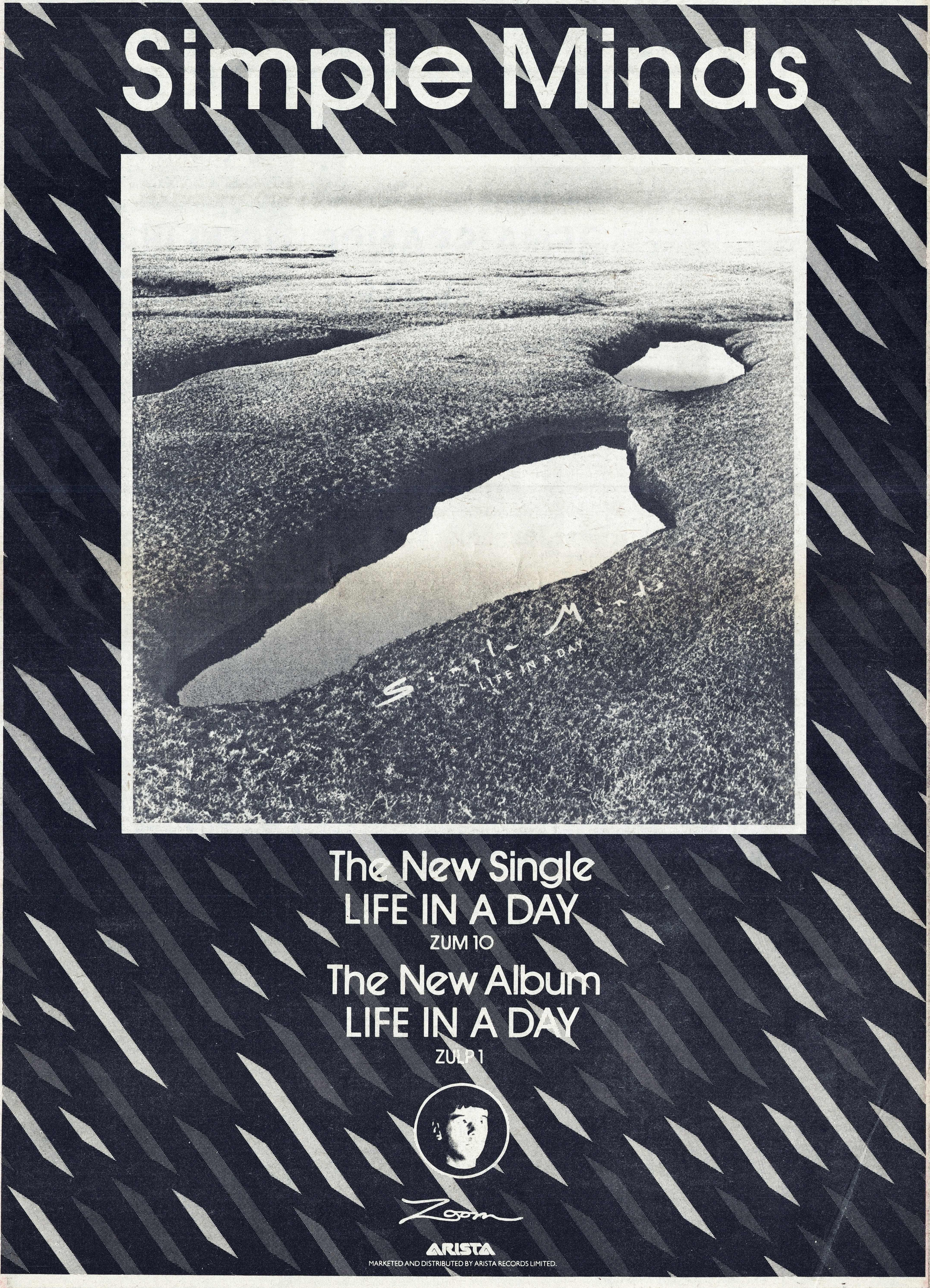
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FORCES OF REALITY

LINTON JOHNSON makes a point

Britain's first reggae poet talks about his music, his life, and his beliefs.

Interview and opinion by ANGUS MacKINNON
Photography by PENNIE SMITH

"THE POSSIBILITY of a Conservative government in this country led by Margaret Thatcher is extremely disturbing, you know.

"Mrs Thatcher and her colleagues have made it clear what their intentions are — well, perhaps they haven't made it clear, but they've created a lot of mischief, a lot of uncertainty among both black and white people . . ."

Linton Kwesi Johnson removes his glasses, rubs some life into his eyes and lights another cigarette. He's exhausted after three days and nights without sleep, so he isn't exactly relishing the awkward, often tedious process of being interviewed, of being asked questions he only has the energy to answer by rote.

Not that Johnson is either surly or evasive — in fact he remains polite and frank throughout our encounter. No, it's simply that there aren't 48 hours in a day. If there were, then Johnson might find himself more able to cope with his currently — and typically — hectic schedule.

At the moment he is simultaneously trying to supervise the release and promotion of his excellent second album, 'Forces Of Victory', to prepare and cut a new single taken from it, to go about his everyday business on behalf of community organisation Race Today, to find time to continue taking part in the occupation of a Brixton, South London youth club that has been summarily closed by the Methodist Church. All this and more, and the strain is evidently telling.

Now 27 and domiciled in Britain since 1963, Linton Johnson has emerged as a powerful and prophetic voice speaking for this country's black community; the responsibility is one he shoulders gladly, and with considerable determination.

Initially it's hard to square his slight stature and often taciturn demeanour with angry, passionate and unflinching poet, performer and activist whose opinions have resulted in a bungled BBC decision to postpone *Dread, Beat An' Blood,* a documentary based around him and his work, until well after the general election — by which time its contents will, of course, be relatively defused — and also in at least one police refusal to licence the same film for showing in a Birmingham cinema (for more details on both bans, see last week's *Thrills,* in which the dates March 2 and 5 *should* have read April 2 and 5).

But soon the totality of the man becomes apparent. Johnson's own experience is, as he'd be the first to insist, typical of his generation. Yet his decision to inform himself of the wider issues lying behind the black experience in Britain today has resulted in him necessarily becoming a man of, to say the least, many parts.

After leaving school with six 'O' levels, Johnson took night classes to qualify for entry to the University of London, whence he emerged with an honours degree in sociology. Subsequently he has written two books of verse, *The Living And The Dead* and *Dread, Beat An' Blood,* provided freelance contributions to numerous publications, given frequent readings of his poetry, involved himself wholeheartedly in community work and, in 1977, found himself the recipient of a Cecil Day Lewis Fellowship, becoming writer in residence for the London Borough of Lambeth.

But by just listing such 'qualifications' (by which our society all too often judges a person's worth), I run the risk of misrepresenting Johnson. It was with good reason that his first album, 'Dread, Beat An' Blood', was credited to Poet (Johnson himself, of course) And The Roots (his band).

Unlike others who have scrambled up the ladder of academic attainment, Johnson has clearly perceived the process for the distraction it can so easily become. He will expound on the importance of self-education, but will dismiss the modish associated concept of 'self-help' out of hand. Self-help, he would tell you, is an innately reprehensible activity, as those who practice it are only helping themselves at the expense of the community at large.

Johnson makes what seems — but in fact isn't — a fine distinction with some justification. Despite the hip weight the term 'roots' has put on in recent years, it still bears emphasising that Johnson has never lost touch with his own in and around Brixton, believing as he does that if you don't know where you're coming from, you're unlikely to know where you're going.

In short, Johnson is first and foremost a pragmatist, a doer and liver as much as he is a thinker. One moment he'll be assiduously checking on Island's progress with his album, the next he'll be level-headedly discussing the manifold difficulties that confront his community — and then he's lost to me, happily bantering in patois to veteran Jamaican trombonist Rico about arrangements for an upcoming concert.

Enough of impressions, though, chew on some expressions instead.

"I THINK," Johnson returns to his theme, "the Tory party will be attempting to rob us of some of the gains we, the black community, have made since we've been in this country. I think the powers of the police will be increased and that you'll find there'll be even more intense policing of our community. We're going to be in for a tough time, but I'm confident that we have the ability to organise ourselves to fight whatever attempts they might make to put us down again."

But, I wonder aloud, was the political 'awakening' of the police in this country, as demonstrated by the 'law and order' policies advocated and pursued by Metropolitan Commissioners Mark and McNee, also Manchester Chief Constable Anderton — was it inevitable, all part and parcel of the state apparatus perpetuating inequalities and inadequacies by taking the line of least — and most repressive — resistance?

"Yes," Johnson replies, "it was inevitable. It's not something I've really thought about because I've been too busy with its immediate results. But it's still extremely dangerous though. The police should really have nothing to do with politics. Nothing at all."

And did Johnson echo my own feelings that the involvement of both major UK political parties in race issues was one largely dictated by self-interest?

"Yes and no. Both the Labour and Tory parties are interested in maintaining the status quo. There's no great difference between them there. In any of those respects — whatever, immigration, you name it — they tend to take the same line.

"In fact," he recalls, "the greatest onslaught ever made on black organisations representing black people in this country was made under Labour governments. In the late '60s and early '70s these organisations were systematically rooted out and destroyed by the police. At the same time urban aid moneys and all those kind of projects, they were cancelled.

"There were specific campaigns directed against our community. When I used to be in the Panthers (Johnson joined the British Black Panthers when still in his teens), our place was smashed up by the Special Branch in '71 and again in '72."

Was there then any conceivable way that relations between the police and the black and Asian communities in the UK, now at an all-time low and dropping lower, could be improved?

"Only when the police stop terrorising black people," Johnson says without a moment's hesitation, "will there be good relations between us and them. Only when the police stop framing black youths on 'Sus' (the antiquated nineteenth century legislation that still enables police to pick up anybody whom they consider to be 'loitering with intent to commit a crime'), when they stop beating up black people, you know. When they cease from terrorising and harassing us."

So what's the psychology behind the police behaving the way they do? Is it because they're ordered to act in that way or because the force attracts a certain kind of recruit?

"It's probably a combination of both. You have some really nasty racists in the police force and they're told to do certain things, you know.

■ Continues over page

"We people in the black community already experience state violence every day of our lives."

■ From previous page

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"I mean, from time to time the whole of an area in Brixton is blocked off. You see a police helicopter flying round above and there's no way out from Coldharbour Lane to Railton Road; all the streets are sealed off. They then say it's a bomb scare (laughs) — but it's no bomb scare . . .

"No, they're carrying out para-military exercises in the black community. I think it's all a consequence of the 1976 Notting Hill Carnival, when for the first time the police and black youth found themselves in open conflict on the streets. Now they're not taking any more chances.

"But I don't believe in a conspiracy. I'm not putting forward a conspiracy point of view. I think the way the police force is organised and the power they have, this is the way this state is organised too — to keep workers and the working class in their place. And blacks, of course, are the most revolutionary section of the working class."

And that, I put it to Johnson, is a belief oddly reinforced by the view held by some that a good deal of National Front support is drawn from white working class voters defecting from the Labour party.

"That's possible, in the sense that most of the people who give the National Front their vote do seem to be Labour; it's just that particular section of the working class who has been led to believe that immigrants are the cause of problems which have been created by the state."

Problems like insufficient and inefficient housing, education and welfare that successive UK governments have signally failed to even begin to solve during the last 20 years?

"Those and many more. But I'll tell you something else. There are no immigrant communities here anymore. Blacks have been in this country for 30 years now. We're no longer immigrants. I've been here since I was 11; I've always been British, and Jamaica's always been British since the sixteenth century."

WIDENING THE net, I suggest that there's a growing awareness in the West (the East too, for all we know) that existing political, social and economic structures just can't take the strain. Look at Europe, for example; it's crisis of confidence time right across the continent, with impotent minority governments more the rule than the exception.

Nobody, neither electorates nor those they elect, knows what to think or do. Forget the International Monetary Fund and its Tokyo Road, the fact remains that the Western Way just won't *work* anymore. As a result, we're seeing an irreversible process of entropy, of countries and societies folding in on themselves (to wit — Labour's anti-EEC election platform led by Tony Benn). Not that the Eastern Way has much to offer either; both the Soviet Union, its satellites and China are meeting equally severe and intractable problems.

"Yeah, nationalism," Johnson nods, "that's what happening in Europe. Look at it in Britain: Scottish, Welsh, even Cornish nationalists. And British nationalism is like German nationalism; it's fascism. You have it in Spain and Italy and France too with all these breakaway separatist groups.

"This business of gunboat diplomacy and still leaning on Africa or wherever — it's a total and utter illusion. The people in power still believe in it though, but they're not living in the twentieth century; they're living in the age of Cecil Rhodes ('founder' of Rhodesia).

"Politics as they are now have nothing to offer people, so they just resort to nationalism. Again, these are not things I've had time to think about. I'd rather not say any more than talk nonsense.

"Naaah (laughs), I'm no Marxist. I've read bits and pieces of *Kapital* and that — but what's a Marxist anyway? I'm a socialist, I have a socialist perspective. I don't know enough Marxism to call myself a Marxist."

All the same, you must have some diagnosis of what's happening.

"British politics are such that the only vehicle for revolutionary change in this country is the working class — and right now I don't see that the white Left is involved in building a viable movement that can come forward with those changes.

"You asked me about Rock Against Racism. I'm fed up with people asking me about them. Let me make my statement about Rock Against Racism right now. To put on popular entertainment for people is one thing, but to forward a political movement through music is another thing. I don't believe RAR is forwarding a movement through music; it's simply putting on good entertainment for people. And I'll say no more about it.

"You see," he shrugs, "I don't concern myself much about all them little groupings — the SWP (Socialist Workers Party), the IMG (International Marxist Group), all those type of people. They're not communicating anything to anybody except themselves. No, what I concern myself with is the independent and radical and revolutionary organisation of blacks — which is what the organisation I belong to is involved in. It makes demands and wages struggles on our own behalf because those of us in it have had some experience of conducting anti-colonial struggles."

I ask Johnson to tell me about Race Today.

"It's a collective of activists, some of whom have come out of the British black movements of the late '60s and early '70s, the most progressive elements of that era. It's an organisation of West Indians, black Britons and Asians. We publish a monthly journal which we use as a weapon in our struggles, with which we mobilise international support on specific issues.

"*Race Today* was originally the journal of the Institute of Race Relations, which used to be what was more or less an academic organisation of colonialists and capitalists with interests all over the world: people just doing anthropological-type research, people with vested interests.

"But that regime was overthrown and transformed, and through that process of change Darcus Howe was made editor of the journal and he literally took it from the Institute into the black community. But we're not just a paper that publishes this and that, but a political organisation, a very powerful one.

"We have no electoral aims as things stand. There would be no point in having them. No, what we're saying is that we have a history that didn't end when we got on the ships and planes to come to England. We brought a history here with us to Britain, we still have it and we're making our own history here.

"We're not the helpless victims that liberals would try to make us out as being. Nobody can do nothing for us. We have to do it for ourselves.

"We're not the helpless victims that liberals would try to make us out as being. Nobody can do nothing for us. We have to do it for ourselves."

What we have to do is build. You have to creep before you walk. That is what we see as necessary."

AND HOW does Johnson see Rasta fitting into that progress?

"Rasta *doesn't* fit into that progress," he retorts.

But does he respect Rasta for what it is and has been?

"Of course, but it's a fact that a lot of people are confused about Rasta. It's just one of many anti-colonialist movements all over the world, in Africa and the Caribbean, and like other similar movements it took on religious proportions. It also became the most powerful expression of the culture of the masses of Jamaica.

"Then, with the advent of independence in Jamaica, the religious aspect in Rasta took on greater significance, importance or whatever. As a cultural force, it has spread all over the world through reggae music and its first ambassador, Bob Marley, and it can now be seen as part of the reggae sub-culture in so far as reggae is by and large dominated by Rastafarians or people with Rasta views. But that's as far as it goes.

"Rasta has not importance as such," Johnson continues apace, leaving my tape machine to pick up the tabs. "Religion is a personal thing and a private thing. People who want to and have a need to believe, they believe. People who don't, they don't believe. I don't see why people look at it from a political point of view or claim that it offers a political solution — because it offers no solution to nothing. It might give spiritual stability to those who share the beliefs, but it does nothing more than that."

So, I presume, Johnson must be sceptical of Rasta's 'Back To Africa' vision —

"As I have said on many occasions, it would be a very good thing for all Rastas who want to go back to Africa to do so. They will then be awoken unto reality. Many of them would suffer culture shock, I know that for sure. Many of them would probably have nervous breakdowns when they see the conditions of existence that the African masses have to live under.

"Rastas think England is Babylon, but Nigeria is Babylon, Ghana is Babylon."

Are there any progressive regimes in Africa then?

"Yes. Those in Angola and Mozambique and, probably, Tanzania. As for — what's his name? — Menghistu in Ethiopia, I've no idea. I haven't time to read the papers to find out what's happening there. But 'Back To Afrrca', you know, that dream died with Marcus Garvey.

"As for the regimes in Rhodesia and South Africa, they will be overthrown. That is historical inevitability. They must crumble and fall. The class contradictions in those societies will destroy them; they're sharper there than anywhere else in the world.

"I'm sure they will win the armed liberation struggle for Zimbabwe. The time of people like Muzorewa (black bishop and secular leader who has joined Ian Smith's 'transitional' government) is fast coming to an end. They'd better find themselves a hiding place very soon in France, Sweden or Switzerland — somewhere safe, you know . . .'

Johnson pauses and cracks open another can of beer. The tape conveniently clicks to an end and we change the subject.

GIVEN THAT dramatic improvements in the UK's educational system are one of several key factors essential to a lessening of inter-racial tensions, I ask Johnson his opinion of the system as it is.

"It is offering nobody nothing," he says with characteristic bluntness, "it's processing people for the labour market and for the dole queue. It's not giving people the chance, the opportunities it should give them. Its standards have fallen a great deal.

"I think — I know — that since my days at school there's been a black explosion there, a total rejection of what the system has to offer. I also think the quality of teaching isn't what it could be. In my experience, many teachers, when they come into a class and see that, say, 20 out of 25 pupils are black, the first thing in the teachers' heads is not 'How can I capture, how can I stimulate the minds of these young men and women?' but 'How can I exercise some discipline and control over this unruly crowd of blacks?' — or whatever."

But is it only the comprehensive system that's at fault?

"No, it's the system in general, all of it. These things I've mentioned, these are just little symptoms; it's what the educational system is geared to do. It runs much deeper and much more fundamentally than that.

"Comprehensive or not, it no matter. The system provides specific material for specific functions to serve specific funtions for capital. Some join the dole queue, some go and work in factories, some go to further education colleages, some go here, some go there . . .

"I tell you, self-education is the only education. I did my three years at university. I did sociology and, of course, seeing as how that's so abstract and so far removed from reality, it's a total and utter waste of time. The discipline of going to that body of knowledge and being able to answer questions about it and balance up the different arguments, that's a good discipline, that's what you get out of it."

What about technology though? In 'Reality Poem' from 'Forces Of Victory', Johnson declaims that *"This is the age of science and technology"*. Does he view technology as another weight the state can apply on people?

"Of course it is. They probably have a computer file with all my details on it somewhere; that's how they want it.

"But technology is progressive too. It means that, for instance, people in Jamaica can listen to a record I make. I believe in progress, you know; technology can offer us lot. It has already given us a great deal. But it has been used and will, I suppose, continue to be used as a means of terrible destruction.

"But my advice to kids today is to learn as much as you can, get as much knowledge as you can through your own efforts.

"I'm basically a self-educated person. I learnt more since I left school than I ever learnt there. That basic training I had at college was important, but knowledge, independent knowledge is essential for living. You have to be well-informed if you're going to be able to survive in the modern world and the modern age."

And was Johnson optimistic that this country might eventually be able to provide its kids with a useful and proper education?

"Well," he demurs, "one could speculate on that. I think the state would have to be completely re-organised — and that means revolutionary changes."

Along what lines — public ownership of the means of production and so on?

"Revolutionary change is when the working classes seize state power. You see, I don't think much about British politics as such. I'm more concerned with what my organisation is doing and where blacks and Asians are at in Britain today.

"I think maybe you're asking me questions I can't answer. I mean, I could say 'The revolution is coming tomorrow', but then I don't believe that for one moment. That it will never come? I don't believe that either. You should be asking white people in white Left organisations about these things . . ."

But I've just spent some time doing just that, I tell Johnson, referring to *NME's* recent RAR interviews, and the white Left aren't much more definite —

"Perhaps you're asking impossible questions," Johnson laughs, "I think you are actually. Who knows what will happen in 20 years? Maybe there'll be a world war in ten years. The political moment in this country doesn't suggest revolution now.

"Although, it must be said, the blacks and Asians are in a better position here than we were when we came and were utterly demoralised. We had fought against colonialism and lost and found ourselves in the mother country. We've made some progress but we've had to wage many struggles to do that. As I've said before, there are a lot of political forces within this society which are intent on robbing us of that progress."

Do you see yourself and your community ever having to undertake an armed struggle?

"That again is something one can't possibly predict, but whatever forms of struggle are necessary — look, if you push a man's head back against the wall, he'll fight. We people in the black community already experience violence, state violence, every day of our lives. Violence is part of our experience, from the days of slavery right down to here and now in England."

Hard words spoken in hard, harsh, hostile times. Weigh them and their inexorable logic well.

IN THE MEANTIME, I ask Johnson to give an account of his involvement in the occupation of the Railton Road, Brixton youth club mentioned earlier.

"Basically, it's a youth club that's been established for well over a decade," he explains." The facilities we use are provided for by public funds obtained by the Church. We have established some independence and some freedom for ourselves with the club; it's a place where black youths can come and have a sense of belonging. They can do table tennis, weight-lifting, see films, have poetry readings: all the kinds of activities that most youth clubs don't do, not under one roof.

"But then, with no prior warning, no notification to the club membership, the Methodist Church minister came and closed it, locked out the membership with two policemen in tow and went around the shopkeepers in the area telling them to board up their windows because the black youth would be rioting.

"Well, instead of rioting, we formed ourselves into an action committee and we've been occupying the building for some seven weeks now to try and win back our youth club. We can't understand how people who profess to be Christians, who profess charity and love and all that kind of talk are behaving in this way.

"And we are determined to win."

(Since my interview with Johnson, I have been unable to obtain any response or comment from the Methodist Church on the matter).

"There's a lot of racists in the Methodist Church," Johnson continues, "in fact there's a split right now in the movement on the question of race. There's some very reactionary people in that Church. The Reverend David Holland, I have *never* met a man who has more contempt for blacks than him. Men such as him are ruthless people, *ruthless*.

"Ours isn't the first youth club to be treated in this way. I used to be a member of the Methodist Church in Brixton — I used to sing in the choir there until my voice broke, and used to be a member of the youth club too. It used to be mixed, although it went all black when the whites moved out of the area. Then, once again, the Methodists just moved in without warning and closed it. Both that Church and the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) *seem* to have a policy of closing down black youth clubs. It's as if they want to colonise us all over again, and it's these things, on these levels, that we have to fight."

AND FROM one pressing concern in Johnson's life to another. Is he happy with 'Forces Of Victory'?

He is, but complains that the fulsome reviews it has earned have almost uniformly ignored the contributions made by the musicians. Johnson goes on to assess each of the players involved, singling out bassist Vivian Weathers, an old school friend as it happens, for special mention, claiming that "he's potentially one of the heaviest reggae musicians in England.

"It was a great, great honour for me personally to have all these talented people playing on what is only my second album. I felt and still feel very proud to have had with me."

Johnson's point is more than moot. It's easy enough to see why

■ Continues page 52

HEAVY METAL'S BACK
...WITH A VENGEANCE!
CENSORED
" . . . awesome hard rock strength. All I know is 'LOVE DRIVE' is certainly one of the best heavy metal albums I've heard in yonks . . . "
Harry Doherty, Melody Maker.
" Another Piece of Meat' . . . this number will become an all time heavy metal classic . . . "
Geoff Barton, Sounds.
SCORPIONS
GONNA DRIVE
YOU TO IT
WITH THEIR ALBUM
'LOVEDRIVE.'
PRODUCED BY DIETER DIERKS
ALBUM FEATURES
MICHAEL SCHENKER
HARVEST
on Harvest
Records and Tapes.

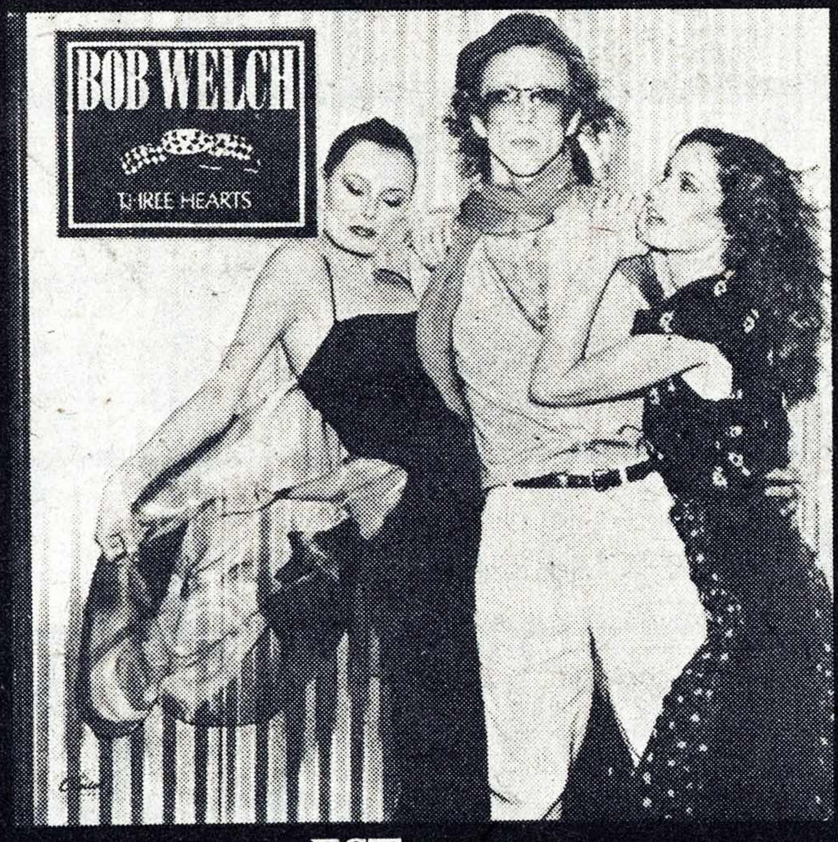
This weekend's the time for a bit of heart-searching.

Bob Welch

The man who gives you Three Hearts

The new album 'THREE HEARTS' from BOB WELCH, features CHRISTINE McVIE, MICK FLEETWOOD & STEVIE NICKS.

12 great tracks including a rock arrangement of LENNON & McCARTNEY'S 'I Saw Her Standing There' and the superb current single 'PRECIOUS LOVE' – all add up to his best album ever.



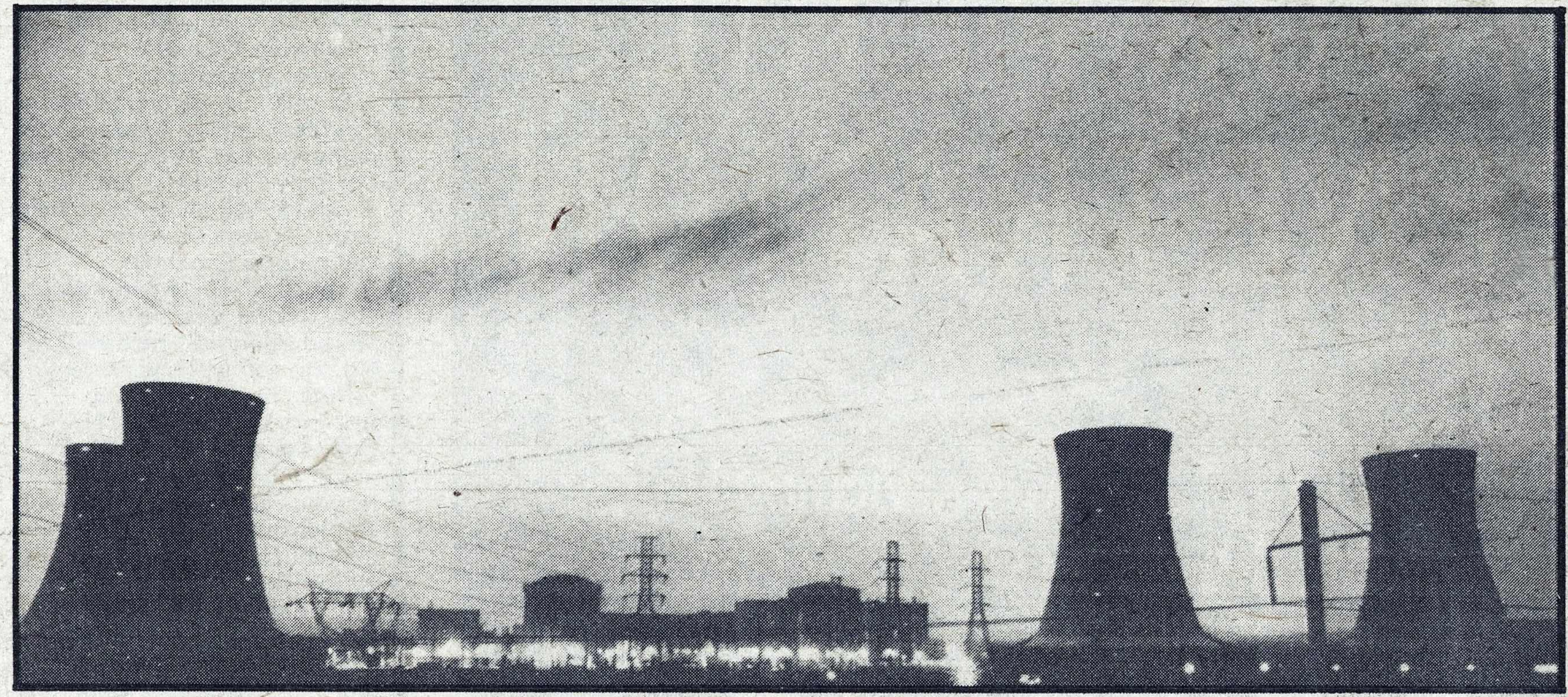
EST 11907

on Capitol records and tapes

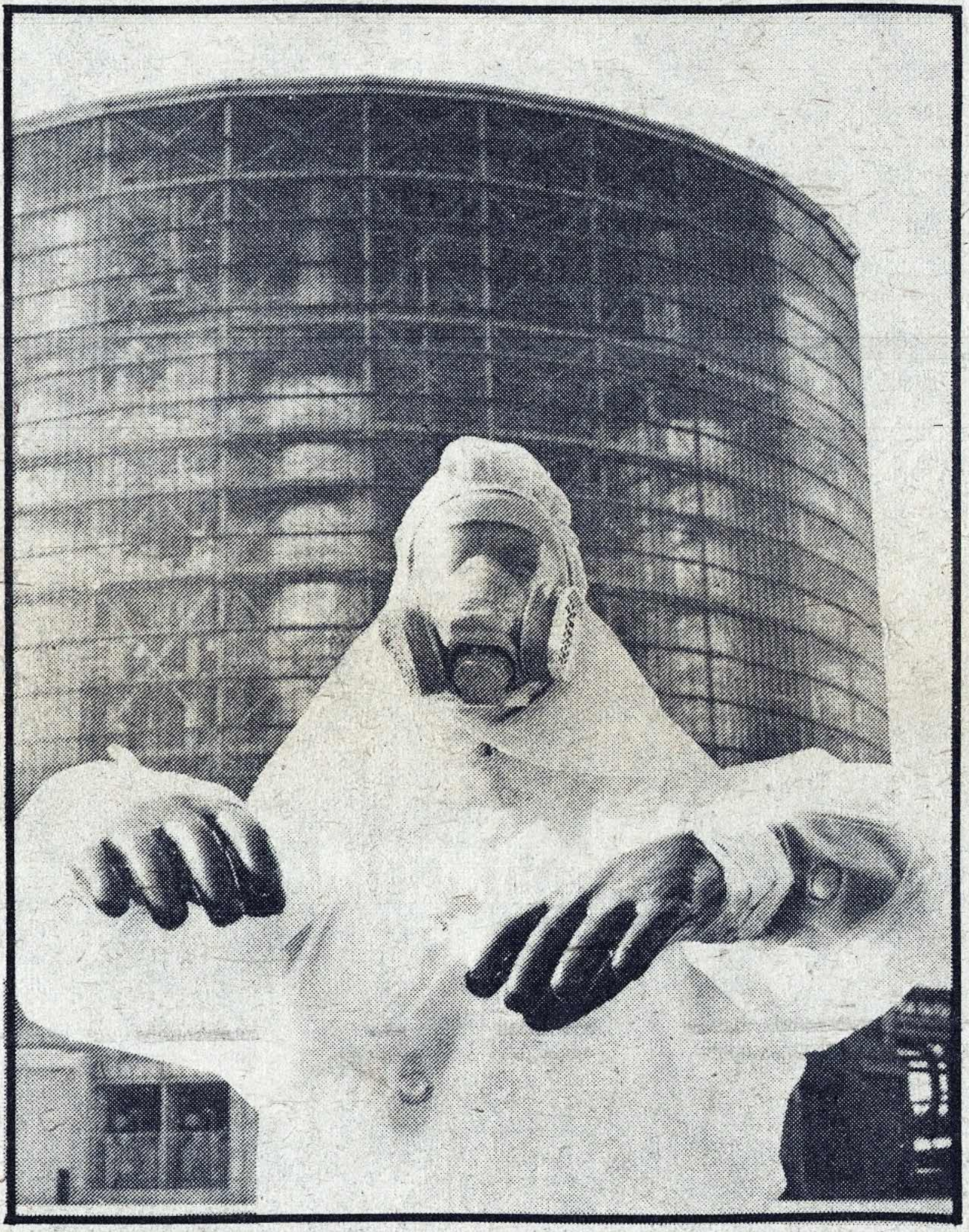
THRILLS

NUCLEAR NEWS

"We all live in Pennsylvania"



Three Mile Island Nuclear Generation Plant on the eve of destruction.



Left: Health Physics Foreman John Millar poses proudly in front of Scotland's £64 million nuclear menace at Hunterston, Ayrshire.

THE FIRST NEWS that came over the Associated Press wire on March 29 seemed innocuous enough. "A water pump used to cool the reactor at the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant broke down today, and a small amount of radioactive steam escaped into the atmosphere, authorities said. They said no one was injured or seriously exposed to radiation and the leak was not considered dangerous."

But by the next day the radioactive cloud had spread more than 17 miles, there were fears that 250,000 people might have had to be evacuated and it was revealed that a highly charged bubble of radioactive gases was trapped in the reactor and could cause it to overheat and explode.

The world's worst civilian nuclear accident, long predicted, had finally arrived.

'Meltdown' had become a possibility and the news reports began reading like science fiction. Pregnant women and children were advised to leave town. Stores sold out of dried food and geiger counters.

At the State capital in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, USA, a command centre for the Governor was established in a bunker 50 feet below ground, complete with food for 240 people for four days, its own freshwater well, communications equipment and an air-filtration system. In addition, a million doses of a chemical intended to reduce the effect of radiation on human thyroid glands were flown into the area.

It will be months before an inspection of the reactor can be made to establish the exact cause of the catastrophe, and even then robot handlers will have to be used because of the excess of radioactivity. But the Federal investigations that have already begun reveal a catalogue of human and mechanical errors, a chain reaction which the power company Metropolitan Edison have done their best to hide.

There have been similar accidents at Three Mile Island before. In this particular case it was three hours before they even realised there was an emergency and a full 48 hours before the Federal authorities knew that there had been a chemical explosion after the first radiation leak.

One ironic coincidence was that a local magazine had carried a fictional article earlier in the year entitled 'Meltdown at Three Mile Island'; the date of the disaster was March 28, the very day it happened for real.

AS FAR AS the nuclear industry was concerned, the worst coincidence was that, shortly before the incident, Columbia Pictures had released *The China Syndrome*, the story of a near-disaster at a nuclear plant close to Los Angeles, starring Jane Fonda, Jack Lemmon and Michael Douglas.

The title refers to a reactor condition when red-hot radioactive material burns through the reactor vessel and down into the earth "all the way to China". In fact, on contact with the outside, the mass would explode violently, spewing radioactive debris over a wide area.

Columbia, not wishing to be seen to capitalise on the tragedy, toned down its advertising campaign, but still spent $5 million, almost as much as it cost to make the picture, on advertising, and its stock rose on the Market as the box office takings rocketed.

The nuclear industry was swift in its condemnation of the film, denouncing the plot as outdated and unrealistic and, in General Electric's case,

DICK TRACY surveys the fallout after Harrisburg

withdrawing its sponsorship of a TV chat show featuring Fonda alongside three ex-GE engineers who had previously resigned over the nuclear safety issue.

The effect on the anti-nuclear lobby can best be summed up by this statement from Ted Harris of the Palmetto Alliance: "We've had people manning the phone 16 hours a day, and it's ringing off the hook . . . A great number say: 'I saw the movie and then came home and saw the same thing on the 11 o'clock news'."

TO ADD TO the discomfiture of the industry, the Karen Silkwood case recently moved for the first time into a public courtroom. Silkwood was a 28-year-old lab technician working at the Kerr McGee plutonium plant in Oklahoma where fuel rods for nuclear reactors are produced; she was so appalled by safety standards that she began collecting information for her trade union.

In November 1974 she was on her way to meet a *New York Times* reporter with some sensitive documents when her car was run off the highway. Karen died and the documents are still missing.

Her family are currently seeking $11.5 million damages from the company for exposing her to dangerous levels of plutonium; according to one expert, her lungs contained twice the amount needed to cause severe cancer.

Many aspects of the case, including who killed her, may never be revealed. One theory held by FBI agent Larry Olsen is that Karen had, without knowing it, stumbled on documents which revealed the activities of a nuclear smuggling ring trading in illegal plutonium.

IT WAS ONCE predicted that there would be 1,000 nuclear plants operating in the US by the year 2000. In the light of recent events this figure now looks like a corporate pipedream. Even before Three Mile Island, there had been reactor accidents in five American states, and just two weeks before, five reactors on the East Coast had been shut down because of the possibly disastrous effect of earthquakes on their cooling mechanisms.

A recent CIA report claims that existing plants are operating well below expectations, that the price of uranium has jumped and that forecasts of future electricity demands have fallen: all of which places nuclear energy in a much less favourable economic perspective.

Caution is now the keynote. Licensing procedures will certainly take a great deal longer than at present, adding considerably to the 12-14 years it takes now between the first permit being granted and a nuclear plant being opened.

Senator Gary Hart, currently preparing legislation for monitoring the safety of nuclear reactors said recently: "We must reform the crisis management system that now exists. Every plant should be remotely monitored by the NRC (Nuclear Regulatory Commission), perhaps by satellite. The monitoring would be done by a high-level public employee who would have the authority to determine when a crisis existed and then to dispatch a group of federal experts, a nuclear SWAT team, to take over complete control of the reactor."

MEANWHILE the repercussions of the Three Mile Island incident are being felt worldwide.

In Germany 35,000 people took to the streets in protest chanting: "We all live in Pennsylvania."

In Britain, eminent figures who had pushed for the building of light-water reactors (PWRs) such as the one at Harrisburg are presently cooling their heels.

Chief supporters of PWRs were Sir Arthur Hawkins, chairman of the Central Electricity Generating Board (CEGB), Sir Arnold Weinstock, managing director of the General Electricity Council (GEC), and Lord Aldington, former Tory minister, chairman of the National Nuclear Corporation and deputy chairman of the GEC.

In '74 Hawkins reversed the CEGB's earlier choice of gas-cooled reactors and announced a plan to order *eighteen* new PWRs by 1983. He also objected to any public discussion of this plan, saying: "In our view these important matters are best dealt with by experts and by the procedures laid down by government, and not debated before the world until decisions are made."

But in their enthusiasm for the cheaper PWRs, the influential industrialists had forgotten to even ask the experts.

A Commons Select Committee convened to consider the CEGB plan was astonished to learn that the decision to build the 18 new reactors had been taken without proper consultation with the National Nuclear Inspectorate — the authority responsible for nuclear safety. The committee recommended *against* PWRs.

A week after their report was submitted to Tory minister Peter Walker, an election was called which returned a Labour government.

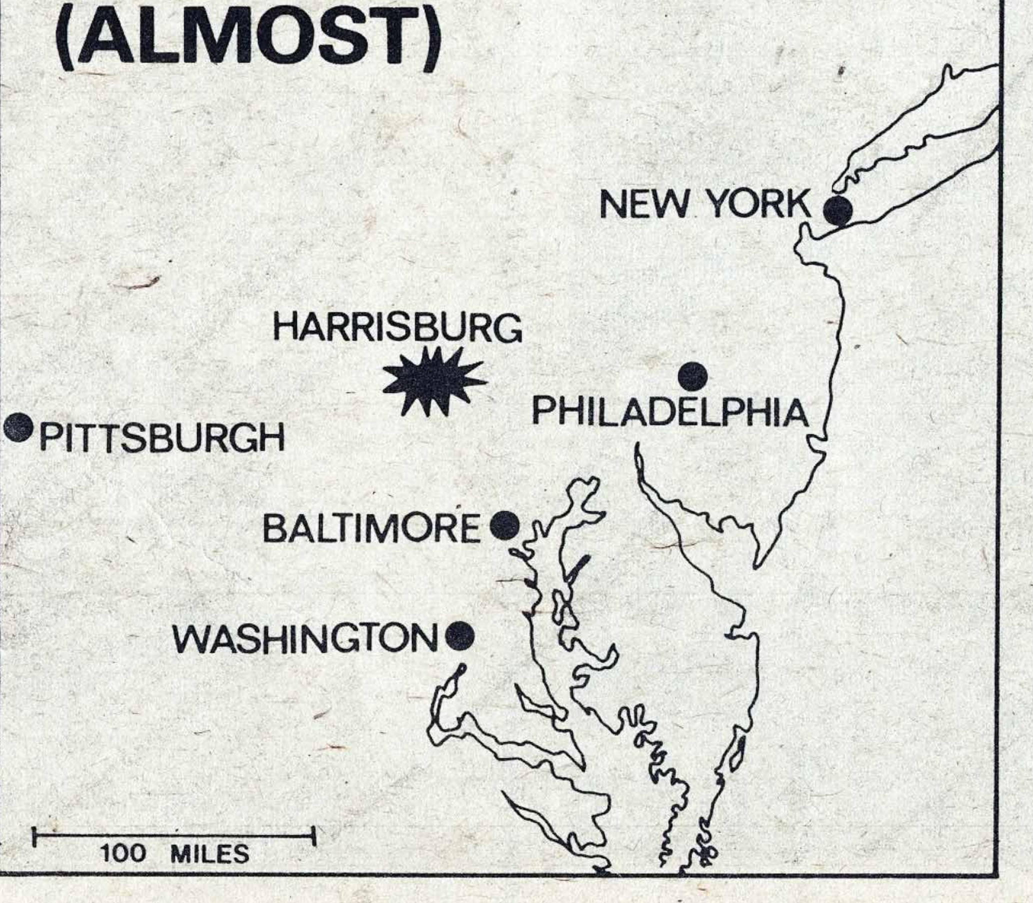
The new administration upheld a preference for the supposedly safer gas-cooled reactor while political manoeuvring continued apace. In 1975 an American company already contracted to build PWRs with the GEC for South Korea tried to get a UK government order for PWRs without offering the facilities for a full study beforehand, but a West German firm, Kraft Werke (no relation) made a timely free offer of the necessary information.

The current position is that the Cabinet have on record an order for a study of PWRs and a "declaration of intent" to order one before 1982. With luck, this will be quietly shelved.

Certainly, the pro-PWR campaigners in both the CEGB and the civil service now have plenty of egg on their faces. But had things worked out different, they might not have had any faces left.

THRILLS

CITIES ON FLAME (ALMOST)



ACTION GUIDE

● TORNESS ACTION

ON MAY 4-7 Torness (5 miles south of Dunbar, 30 miles east of Edinburgh) will be the site of the largest and most significant anti-nuclear demonstration yet seen in the UK. It will protest against plans to build eight nuclear reactors and thus create the largest nuclear park in Britain.

The Torness Alliance — which embodies such groups as Greenpeace, Friends Of The Earth, SCRAM and SERA — views such developments as unnecessary, uneconomic and a further step towards a highly centralised, state-controlled society of which they want no part.

They write that "We are trying to arrange a diverse series of events at the gathering . . . with the emphasis on participation rather than passive spectacle." Events include bands, exhibitions, theatre and plans for some kind of direct action protest.

Details about transport from various parts of the country from Greenpeace in London (01-633 0929) or SCRAM in Edinburgh (031) 225 7752. More details next week.

THRILLS

IGNORE AT YOUR PERIL!

PENETRATION

ON TOUR

APRIL

20	HANLEY	Victoria Hall
21	MIDDLESBROUGH	Rock Garden
22	MIDDLESBROUGH	Rock Garden
24	BRISTOL	Locarno
25	CARDIFF	Top Rank
27	LIVERPOOL	Mountford Hall
28	COLCHESTER	Essex University
29	HEMEL HEMPSTEAD	Pavilion
MAY		
2	BRIGHTON	Top Rank
4	UXBRIDGE	Brunel University
5	LEEDS	Polytechnic
6	SHEFFIELD	Top Rank
7	BLACKPOOL	Norbreak Castle
9	LONDON	Rainbow
10	GUILDFORD	Civic Hall
11	CAMBRIDGE	Corn Exchange
12	NORTHAMPTON	Pavilion
13	CHELMSFORD	Chancellor Hall
14	NORWICH	St. Andrews
16	BIRMINGHAM	Top Rank
17	COVENTRY	Locarno
18	MANCHESTER	Apollo
19	CARLISLE	Market Hall

SPECIAL GUESTS:

COWBOYS INTERNATIONAL

DANGER SIGNS

New single out now on Virgin Records.
7" and 12" versions available. VS257 VS25712.

Virgin

"I never nicked no licks," says Rod

MODISH pop singer Rod Stewart may be about to take legal action over two accusations of musical plagiarism.

Brazilian singer Jorge Ben has filed a writ in America citing that part of 'Do Ya Think I'm Sexy?' is taken from his song 'Taj Mahal', and Scottish band Slippery Dick are claiming an uncanny resemblance between 'I Was Only Joking' and their own 'Paradise Found', recorded as a demo some two years ago.

Rod's record company, Riva, staunchly denied both claims when *Thrills* lent an enquiring ear, but said that Rodders acknowledges the similarities.

"What complicates the issue," they claim, "is that Rod only wrote the lyrics. Carmine Appice wrote the music to 'Do Ya Think I'm Sexy?', as did Gary Grainger for 'I Was Only Joking'.

Had Rod been aware of the two claimants in the past?

"I think Rod has been to Brazil, so he may have heard Jorge Ben, but he certainly knew nothing about Slippery Dick. The recording we eventually heard of theirs was done in their living room. It wasn't even a proper demo and hadn't got a copyright."

Jorge Ben has since withdrawn his complaint because all royalties from 'Do Ya Think I'm Sexy?' have been donated to UNICEF anyway. But do Riva intend to sue if Slippery Dick persist with their allegations?

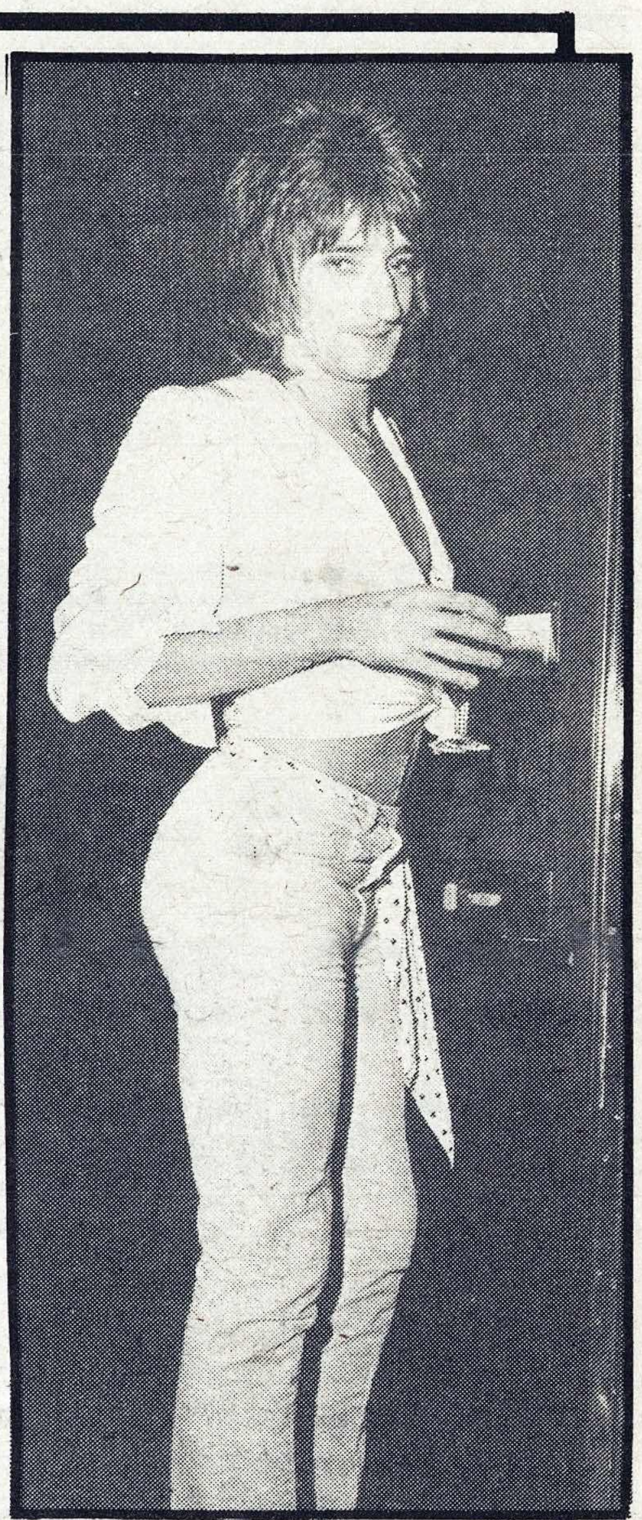
"Yeah — but now they've stopped taking legal action, and just keep phoning up various newspapers and saying, 'Rod Stewart's ripped off our song'. They just seem to be getting publicity from the whole thing. We said, 'Either take us to court and make a case of it, or forget the whole thing. But don't keep shooting your mouth off'.

"I know the band are looking for a recording contract — and good luck to them — but the whole thing could be very damaging to Rod."

The case continues. Every juncture sells a story.

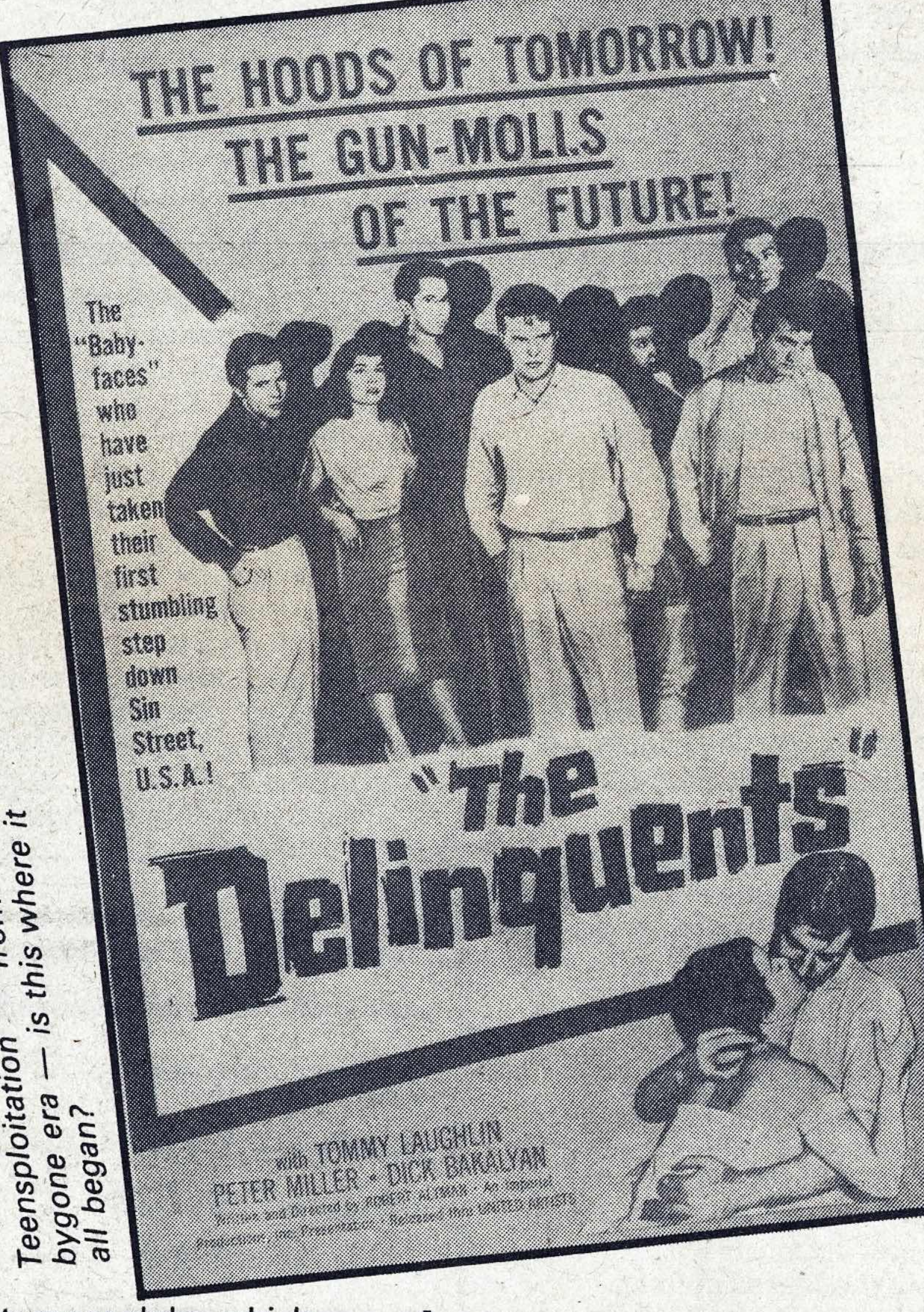
MARK ELLEN

THRILLS



Rod drinks his lawyer's health. Pic: Jorgen Angel.

Gang movie violence rages on



Teensploitation from a bygone era — is this where it all began?

THE SECOND of the street gang cycle of motion pictures, *Boulevard Knights*, has sparked an even greater wave of violence in the U.S. than *The Warriors*, with a total of four shootings and five stabbings reported to date.

At Pomona, California, five girl members of the 12th Street gang attacked two other girls and are now being held without bail on charges of attempted murder.

In San Francisco a gang battle between Chicano and Chinese gangs left four people shot, one seriously wounded and a fifth stabbed.

Boulevard Nights tells the story of two brothers in the Chicano barrios of East Los Angeles, the elder one attempting to get the younger one away from the gang subculture that finally destroys him.

Believed to be the first major distribution release made entirely in the Mexican-American ghetto and starring a cast of Hispanic unknowns, *Boulevard Knights* was originally conceived by director Bill Benenson as a documentary on the Chicano custom car clubs, which feature heavily in the movie.

Warner Brothers released the film in cities with heavy Chicano populations, backed by a $1 million advertising campaign which, unlike Paramount ads for *The Warriors*, they claim they are not going to tone down.

Warners are sharing additional security costs at all cinemas playing the movie with the exhibitors, whereas Paramount covered the whole cost.

DICK TRACY

THRILLS

LOWRY

"We're utterly sick of the double-dealing hypocrisy, bogus morality and phoney venal values of the music industry. And we've made a record to prove it."

IGGY POP

New Album:
NEW VALUES.
PRODUCED BY JAMES WILLIAMSON
New Single:
I'M BORED.
Single: ARIST 255
Album: SPART 1092
Cassette: TCART 1092.

ON TOUR

SPECIAL GUESTS: ZONES

ARISTA

Friday, 20th April, MANCHESTER, Russell Club.
Wednesday, 25th April, LONDON, Music Machine.
Sunday, 29th April, REDCAR, Coatham Bowl.
Friday, 4th May, BIRMINGHAM, Barbarella's.
Monday, 7th May, CARDIFF, University.
Friday, 11th May, NEWCASTLE, Mayfair Ballroom.
Saturday, 21st April, LIVERPOOL, Eric's (2 shows).
Friday, 27th April, WEST RUNTON, Pavilion.
Monday, 30th April, EDINBURGH, Tiffany's.
Saturday, 5th May, COLCHESTER, Essex University.
Tuesday, 8th May, BRISTOL, Locarno.
Saturday, 12th May, LEEDS, University.
Sunday, 22nd April, SHEFFIELD, Top Rank.
Saturday, 28th April, LEICESTER, University.
Tuesday, 1st May, GLASGOW, Apollo.
Sunday, 6th May, HEMEL HEMPSTEAD, Pavilion.
Thursday, 10th May, COVENTRY, Tiffany's.
Sunday, 13th May, LONDON, Lyceum.

Who said rock and politics don't mix?

INTENSE PRESS speculation as to whether or not California's most eligible bachelor, Governor Jerry Brown, will marry his constant companion Linda Ronstadt during their current much-publicised African safari, is the least of his problems.

Seems that the Governor's biggest headache is over the antics of his pushy conservative Republican Lieutenant, Mike, Mike Curb.

Jerry Brown. Pic: Chester Simpson.

A record-biz whiz-kid, 34-year-old Mike Curb is just one of a number of record industry moguls who have recently set their sights on a political career.

The ambitious Curb has already had a heated confrontation with Brown, over the former's insistence on acting as Governor whenever Jerry Brown is out of California—which has prompted speculation about a possible bid on Curb's part to challenge rock fan Jimmy Carter for Democratic nomination.

Curb recently went so far as to overrule Brown's choice of a judicial appointment — a move which prompted Brown to work a 24-hour shift prior to leaving for his African holiday, filling 40 jobs in a concerted effort to prevent Curb from repeating his defiance.

Curb retaliated by publicly threatening to hold a referendum about school bussing—a touchy subject amongst Republicans, especially those in LA where distances to be travelled often mean that school kids have to get up at dawn. For technical reasons such a referendum could not be staged while Brown is away, but the black community is said to be extremely bitter that Brown departed before knowing the outcome.

Some political observers insist that Brown's ambitions for a term in the White House are causing the Governor to lose some of his usual shrewd political judgement. Others say it's his preoccupation with the leggy La Ronstadt. Those close to him suggest Mike Curb's lust for power.

So who is this guy Mike Curb?

Born in Savannah, Georgia, Curb was only 25 when, in 1968, he was appointed President of MGM Records. Shortly after taking over this position, Curb hit the headlines when he unloaded practically all of the label's heavy rock bands, whom he considered 'drug-orientated'.

Perhaps recalling how artists of the Pat Boone ilk had built their careers in the '50s by sanitising black R&B hits for white consumption, Curb then set about vigorously promoting The Osmonds as a diluted white alternative to The Jackson Five.

Prior to what eventually proved to be an unsuccessful bid to revibe MGM's ailing image, Curb made his reputation as the Roger Corman of rock by assembling various artists soundtrack albums for American-International's series of lurid youth exploitation B-movies like *Riot On Sunset Strip, Psych-Out, Teenage Rebellion, The Wild Angels, Mondo Hollywood* and *Freakout USA*. Movies whose predominant themes were sex and drugs and rock and roll and violence.

These soundtrack albums, which featured, amongst others, The Seeds, Davie Allan & The Arrows, The Electric Flag and Ronstadt's first group The Stone Poneys, were all released on Curb's Sidewalk label.

Just the right sort of credentials for a political career.

ROY CARR

THRILLS

Labelle's lucky number

THE THEORY was simple: internationally famous trio splits up, three healthy new careers blossom from the seeds of the old.

The practice was something else again: trio splits up, all fall over. Leastways, that's the way it looked to the outsider.

When Labelle decided to close down the old firm, Nona Hendryx went straight for the rock market with a disappointing tour and a duff album. Sarah Dash, reportedly aiming to be a 'grown up' all-round entertainer, disappeared from view and has only just emerged with a moderate disco hit. Patti Labelle stuck with what she was best at — soulful singing, spiced onstage with dynamic presentation, while on record she depended on strong songs and imaginative production.

Patti Labelle. Pic: Joe Stevens

Her first solo appearance, in London at a CBS convention, proved that she had no problems onstage. But her first couple of albums, 'Patti Labelle' and 'Tasty', produced by David Rubinson, captured little of the same magic. Too much studio touching up and not half enough Patti as she really is.

In London last week for a Venue gig and scattered interviews, Patti showed far more confidence in her third album, 'It's Alright With Me', produced by Skip Scarborough, who she feels has done her proud. On one brief hearing, I'm not sure I share her faith, although I certainly believe her own enthusiasm. The 'new' slim, trim Ms Labelle is still as unaffectedly disarming as ever, definitely not one of yer gushing prima donnas; her delight at working with Scarborough is no promotional front.

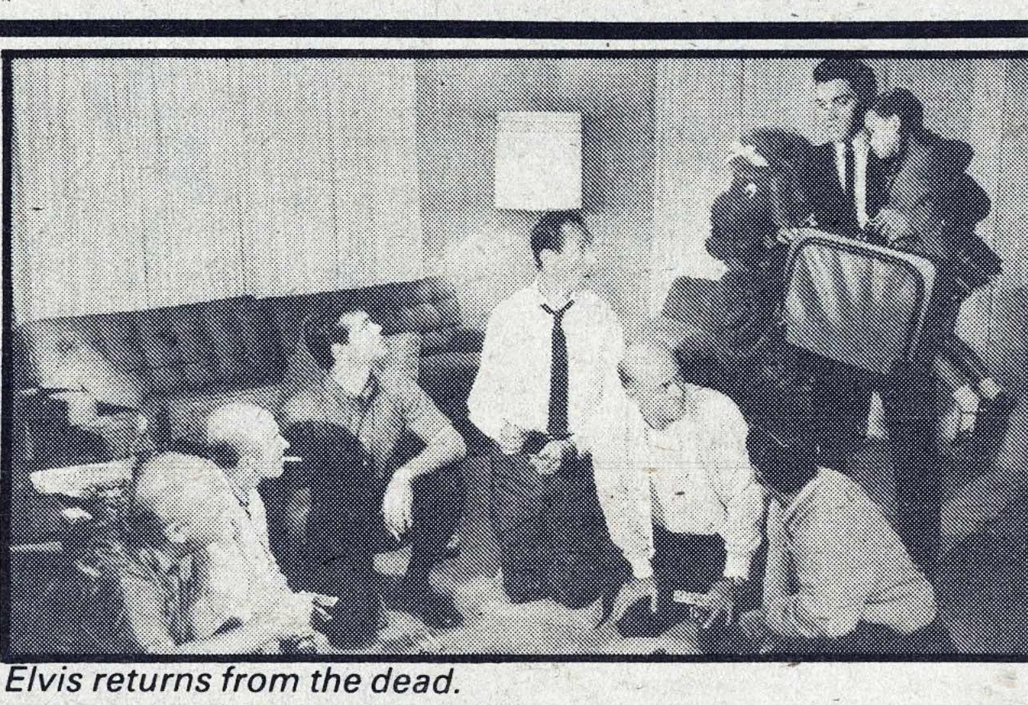
In America the album will probably be her most successful yet. Despite the low profile since the split she's been working regularly throughout the States, most recently on a highly successful tour with Richard Pryor (who presented her with a Cadillac and sauna bath "in gratitude"), so that home crowds now fully accept her as an independent performer and want to hear the new material. Over here, the memory lingers on.

The Venue gig was a taster for a more ambitious tour later in the year, intended to establish the solo Patti Labelle in Europe. Will we be charmed? *On The Town* will reveal all next week.

CLIFF WHITE

THRILLS

Elvis still dead say experts



Elvis returns from the dead.

OLD ROCK idols may die, but they still keep right on making records.

It had to happen. Whilst the last dime is busy being squeezed from the Pelvic back catalogue, some heinous Minnesota label has hit on a scam of unearthy enterprise —releasing 'new' Elvis Presley albums.

A steal at $9.95, this profane piece of plastic has immortalized the one heart-stopping hour in which the deceased El spoke to the world through the medium David Behr — a man of rare telepathic leanings and no mean eye for an angle.

They're over — all those tortured years you've been racked by doubt and suspicion. "Hear the answers to over 65 questions that you yourself would surely have asked, had you been present at this history-making event!" Questions like . . .

"Did Elvis commit suicide?" **(only one man knows!)** *"Did Elvis cheat on Priscilla?"* **(lifts the lid on rampant infidelity!).** *"How does Elvis feel about his fans?"* **(heartfelt compassion lingers after his earthly passing). And even —** *"Hear Elvis describe the strange world in which he now lives, and reveal startling facts about the mysterious, unearthly beings who dwell among us! — the real truth about the UFO phenomenon, as told by Elvis."*

We can't wait for a second album, doubtless containing further celestial revelations and more home hints on the paranormal. It'll be out of this world.

MARK ELLEN

THRILLS

Look Great! The French Way.

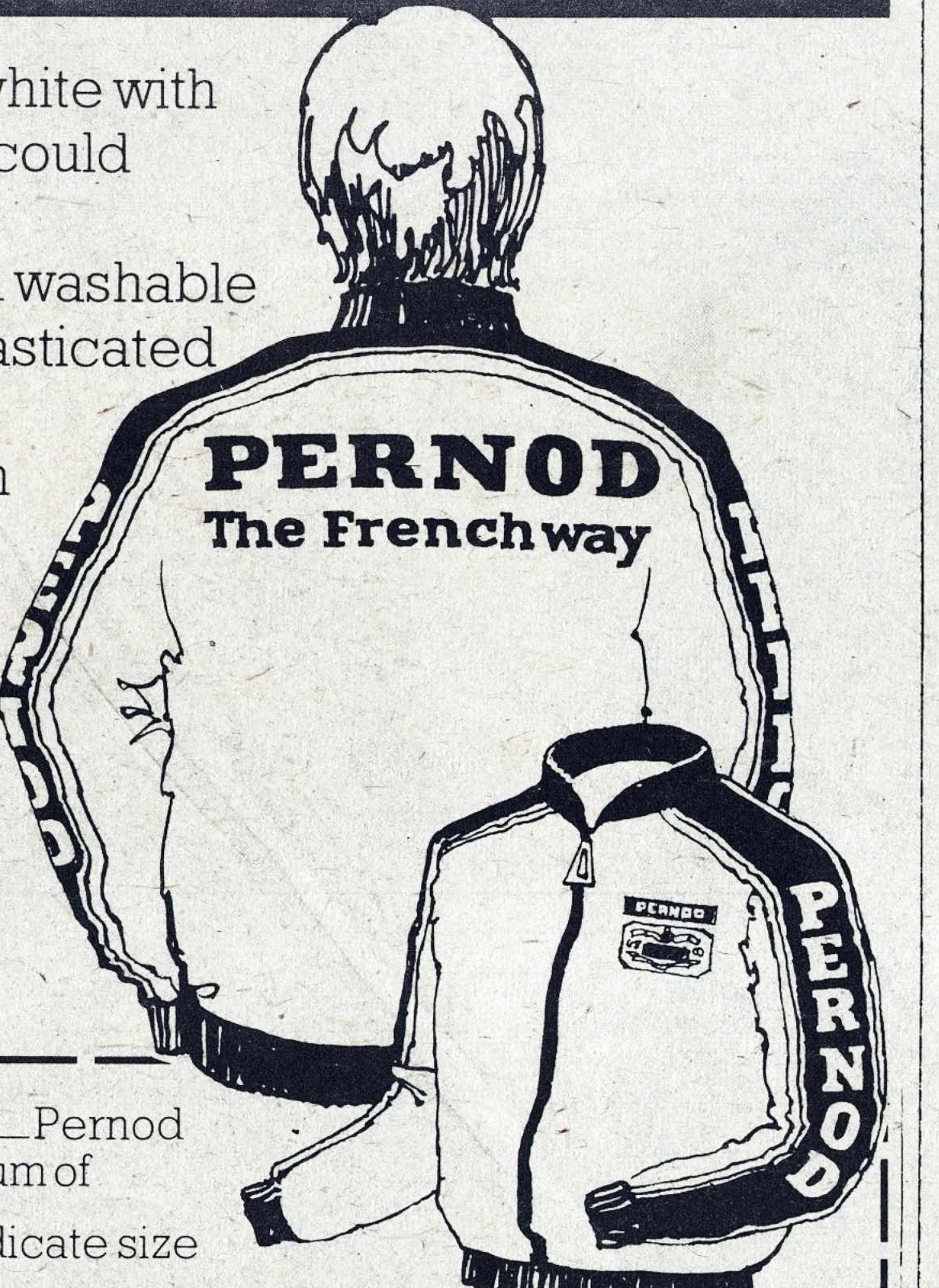
This stylish leisure jacket in white with Pernod Blue and Yellow stripes could be yours for just £3.95.

Continental styled in light and washable 'Tyvek' the jacket has knitted elasticated waist, cuffs and collar.

It's available in four sizes from Pernod Jacket Offer, 155 Templemere, Sprowston Road, Norwich, Norfolk. Please allow up to 28 days for delivery.

Offer closes on 31st July.
Offer subject to availability.

£3.95 (including p&p and VAT)



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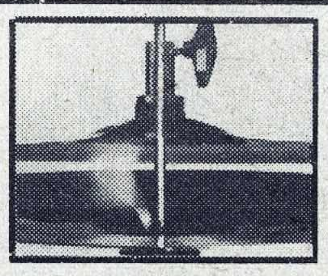
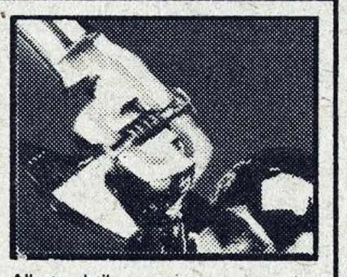
SONOR PERCUSSION

When only the best is good enough

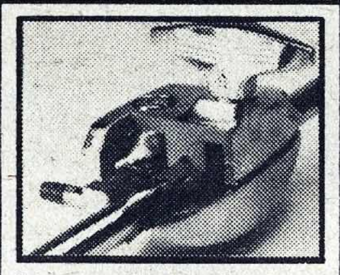
Here's why!



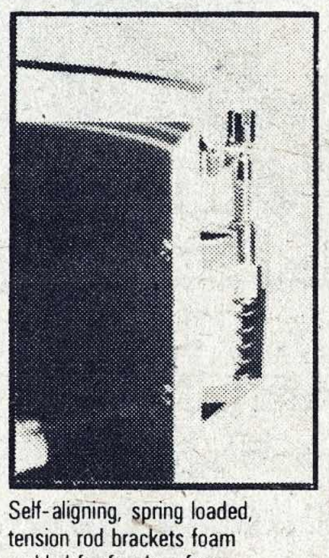
Hexagonal top rod ensures constant position of Hi-Hat clutch.



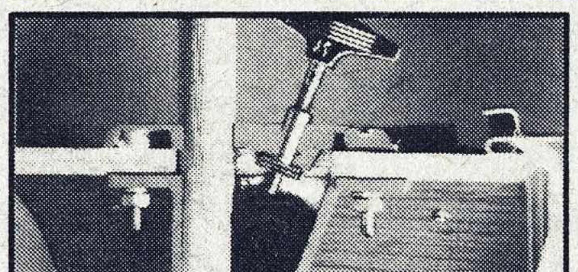
All stand tilters cast over a steel skeleton giving added strength.



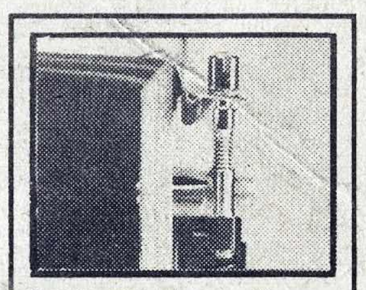
Prism clamping device for positive positioning of tom-tom legs and two dimensional bass drum spurs.



Self-aligning, spring loaded, tension rod brackets foam padded for freedom from unwanted noise.

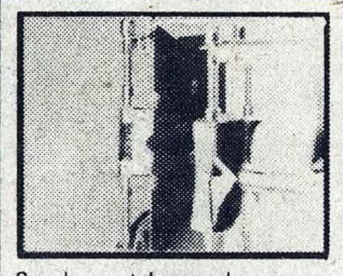


No direct 'screw to metal' contact reduces wear. Allows 'finger-tight' control on all fittings.



9 ply beechwood shell, with floating head action, for greater resonance and clarity of tone.

Convertible rubber tip on all stand feet and bass drum spurs for firm grip on any floor surface.



Seamless metal snare drum shell with specially shaped sound edges to project the tone and power.

To M. Hohner Ltd., 39-45 Coldharbour Lane, London SE5 9NR

I think I deserve the best, please send me the Sonor illustrated catalogue and list of key dealers.

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No boppin' while shoppin'

IT'S COME TO *Thrills* ears of late that the Performing Rights Society (PRS), who exist to collect royalties for songwriters, are imposing a licence fee on all record shops that play music publicly. Effectively, if a shop plays records through anything but soundproofed booths or headphones, then the shop has to pay an annual sum to the PRS relative to the size of its floor space.

Thrills contacted the PRS to ask what had brought about this new levy.

"Until '76," they explained, "we excluded all record and radio shops from licensing. But there came a point when the general growth and change of nature in the industry was such that playing records in shops amounted to a performance in public — and hence should be licensed."

What sort of growth and change they didn't say.

The money raised, they inform us, goes to the lyricist, composer and publisher involved. Asked if any artists had objected that this countered their free publicity, they said that they "weren't aware of anyone advancing that argument."

Yet in a legal case against Harlequin Records, defence witnesses such as Mike Oldfield upheld that anything stopping the flow of new talent can only be detrimental to the industry. Harlequin lost the case, and subsequently Virgin Records were also forced to comply with the PRS licensing agreement.

Virgin were as unhappy about the settlement as they were sympathetic with smaller concerns less able to meet the payment. "For us it's not crippling" they assert. "We can at least afford to pay the damn thing."

And so yer local street-corner disc emporium takes another knock. Messrs Boots, Woolies and Smith must be laughing.

COUNTER SPY

THRILLS

Caption the cuckoo

BY THE TIME you read this, it's quite probable that no less than ten 'oldies' will be simultaneously breaking out on the British singles charts. The reason for this unprecedented phenomenon is that Lightning Records have just launched their Cruisin' series — a limited edition of ten 7-inch picture discs with each single boasting two bona back-to-back oldies and each sporting a different colour photograph of a custom car.

Just to whet your appetite, the ten singles are:

- Chris Montez 'Let's Dance'/Lonnie Mack 'Memphis'
- Ketty Lester 'Love Letters'/Casinos 'Then You Can Tell Me Goodbye'
- The Del Vikings 'Come Go With Me' & 'Whispering Bells'
- The Drifters 'Save The Last Dance For Me' & 'When My Little Girl Is Smiling'
- The Teddy Bears 'To Know Him Is To Love Him'/Jody Reynolds 'Endless Sleep'
- Johnny Tillotson 'Poetry In Motion' & 'Princess Princess'
- Bobby Darin 'Dream Lover' & 'Mack The Knife'
- The Everly Bros 'Bird Dog' & 'Devoted You'
- The Earls 'Remember Then'/Billy Bland 'Let The Little Girl Dance'
- Jewel Akins 'Birds & The Bees'/The Fendermen 'Mule Skinner Blues'.

Still with us?

Well, *NME* just happened to help *five* complete sets of these Cruisin' picture discs, fall of the back of a lorry and we wanna get rid of them like, quick, see?

You can help. All you've gotta do is supply a witty caption to the above photograph of Phil and Don Everly greeting Uncle Sam, stick it in an envlope and mail it pronto.

The *five* best entries will each receive a complete set of ten Cruisin' picture discs. Closing date: May 3.

All entries to be sent preferably on a postcard to:

Roy Carr Health Spa & Sauna Inc., New Musical Express, 5-7 Carnaby Street, London W.I.

THRILLS

Ain't science wonderful?

IN ITS fearless efforts to satisfy the public appetite for new toys, the electronic games industry has come up with yet another startling innovation: talking pinball.

It's a couple of years away from the arcades yet but when it arrives this is what to expect.

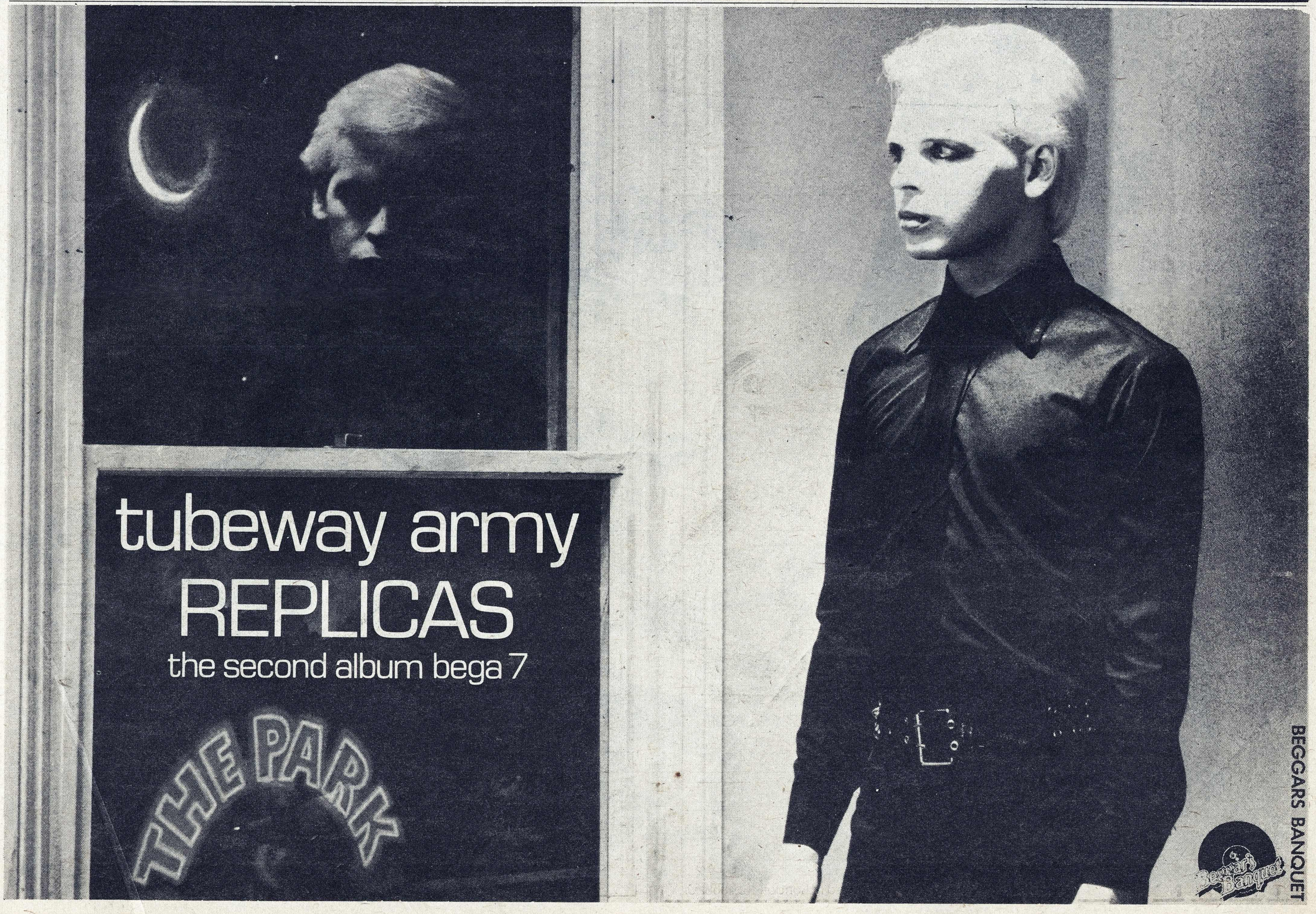
The machine is outfitted with a computerised voice synthesizer, programmed to create 10 different phrases as well as the usual ear-splitting sound effects.

As your ball ricochets off the bumpers, the machine will say things like "Ouch" and "Nice Shot". When you tilt it you'll hear "Ex-cu-u-se me" and, when no one's playing the machine will lure the punters by shouting "Got a Quarter?"

DICK TRACY

THRILLS

The Lone Groover BENYON



WHEN THE DAYLIGHT COMES

IAN HUNTER

Everybody's steppin' on The Accelerators

MY FIRST experience of The Accelerators stamped 'martyr' all over them. At Paddington's Western Counties pub, a half-timbered edifice more redolent of scampi and baskets than late '70s strum 'n' thump, the plug was pulled mid-set and their twenty quid withheld: "unsuitable", "bad for business", etc.

Still, they got a song out of it.

The Accelerators' luck hasn't changed much since. Omitted from Ian Wood's recent *Thrills* round-up of Merseyside bands, a disagreement with Eric's club means the Liverpool five-piece won't be on the forthcoming compilation album.

Then, on Dingwalls' 'audition night' last month, they played mid-evening to a single-figure audience. Encouraging, huh?

If the band let such things bother them they'd have crumpled long ago. Even at deserted Dingwalls they oozed spiky proficiency and self-belief, singer Chris Martin barking the lyrics to attention-grabbers like 'Blue Star Liner' and 'Radio Blues'.

The harsh, pacey surface reflects the last couple of years, but with the frenzy honed to meet their own requirements.

Petite, peroxide Kathy Freeman (guitar, piano, vocals) calls it "machine age R&B — like Chuck Berry would play if he were still alive. The thing about this R&B business is you get a lot of purist bands repeating what's already been done, plus a lot of young bands who don't know enough about it — The Undertones, for instance."

Lead guitarist Martin Smith (attempted moustache) has the most blues-soaked background. Does he think The Accelerators' approach was moulded by the post-Pistols era?

"Not really. I think we'd have been playing like this anyway, it's just the basic rock'n'roll rush."

He and Kathy moved up from the South four years ago, formed a blues band and have since acquired a resilient fatalism impressive even by Merseyside standards. Their house in Liverpool 8 is the band's centre of operations, the egg-box-lined garage functioning as Accelerator Studios. Kathy's hustling ability is vital; Trumans finally paid them for the Western Counties fiasco just to keep her quiet.

Musically, her scrubbed chords thicken the sound — "rhythm guitar should be felt and not heard" — while the blues connection makes most sense in Martin's deliberate, ringing lines, occasionally sparring with Chris's harp. The rhythm section is exceptional, with Tony Doyle using his funk background to anchor and propel, sticking ascloseasthis to Brian Damage's decisive drums.

Yet after 18 months The Accelerators have failed to garner even a Mekon-like reputation for stubborn independence, perhaps because autonomy to them is less a big deal than simple necessity, too obvious to need articulating. Tony apart, the band are all 25 plus: what price poverty and the older person, Kath?

"A lot of bands who came up in 1977 haven't lasted out. We just kept gigging steadily through a pretty exciting time — it's probably because we're older that we've had the patience to carry on.

"None of us are going to get married or anything."

HARRY GEORGE

THRILLS

Acceleratin' (L—R): Tony Monotony, Chris Sensitive, Brian Damage, Martin Accelerator and (front) Kathy Apathy. Who said silly names were dead?

dictionary [dikshonari] *n* lexicon, book listing the words of a language alphabetically and giving their meanings, pronunciations *etc*; alphabetical list of the words of one language with their equivalents in another; list of words used in connexion with some special subject, with explanations.

THE COMPILERS of modern English dictionaries, by temperament as well as by the practical dictates of lengthy deadlines, tend to make few concessions to contemporary jargon.

However, the *Oxford Paperback Dictionary* (Oxford University Press, £1.75), published last week, makes a gallant attempt to stay abreast of the times. Punk rock, reggae and Rastafarian are all included for the first time; so, for that matter, are bionic, skateboard, quango, no-go area and granny flat.

Unfortunately, the aficionado (n. a devotee of a particular sport or pastime) may be disappointed with the definition of punk rock (a type of pop music involving outrage and shock effects in music, behaviour and dress). After all, the person of whom that is probably most apposite is Alice Cooper, circa 1971, and he now plays golf with Bob Hope.

It is also unlikely that the definition of reggae (n. a West Indian style of music with a strongly accented subsidiary beat) would convey much to the uninitiated; although it is perhaps a shade more accurate than the more ambitious definition in the much-respected Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary (n. gay, aggressive rock music of the West Indies, imported into Britain by immigrants in the mid-'60s).

In many ways, the new O.P.D. seems an incomplete barometer of the times. I can recall ten years ago having semantic discussions about the distinction in meaning between "hassle" and "hustle" (occasioned by the sleeve-notes of a Grateful Dead album) — and there definitely is a difference — and yet the O.P.D. assumes that they're almost interchangeable.

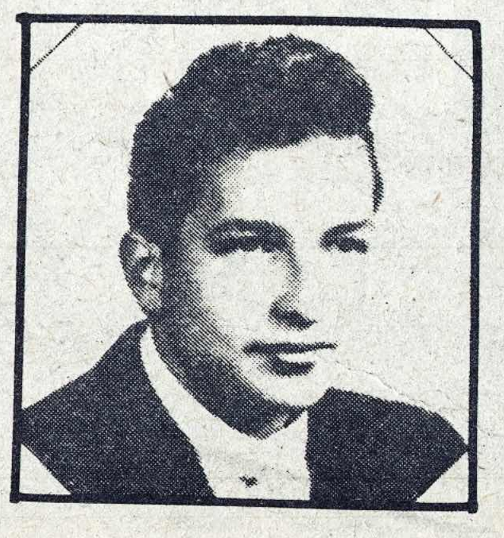
Disco is acknowledged as an informal abbreviation of discotheque, but not as a specific style of music. Bandspread is not included, even though many people probably still wonder what the 'BS' on their transistor radios stands for. Hype is defined not as a nefarious malpractice to influence chart placings artificially, but as a drug addict. *(A drug addict??)*

Samuel Johnson, admittedly, never had to cope with such problems. However, in the final analysis, while the O.P.D. is certainly not a rip-off (n. (slang) something fraudulent, theft), it might just be a cop-out (n. (Amer. slang) an escape; a failure to do what one promised.)

BOB WOFFINDEN

THRILLS

SUSS THE SCHNOOK



"All right, who's the smartass behind this Blackmail Corner thing? Ludicrous Johnny Cash haircut, huh? Poop-eating smirk? Pudgy chocolate-cheeks! Preposterous jacket! Laughable ears! You wouldn't talk about Donavan like that, would you — or David Blue or Elliott Murphy or Bruce Springsteen or Steve Forbert or John Cooper Clarke or (Oh, shut up — Ed.)"

THE END

BUNK DOGGER'S

NEW SINGLE

WOMEN IN UNIFORM

PB 5148

RCA Records and Cassettes

Waiting for the lucky strike

After setting the woods on fire, pyromaniacs MATCHBOX would like to start a bigger blaze. Some kind of widespread rockabilly inferno, in fact. CLIFF WHITE reports.

GRAHAM FENTON: Pic: PAUL SLATTERY

MATCHBOX (from left): Steve Bloomfield, Jimmie Redhead, Graham Fenton, Freddie Poke, Gordon Scott. Pic: GRAHAM BARKER.

"TRY TO QUOTE us correctly," I'm reminded. Politely, y'understand, but pointedly. "Last time someone wrote about us they left out half of what we said and it came out sounding bad. Next thing we knew, we had blokes coming up to us at gigs and getting all shirty, demanding, 'What's all this about you forsaking the Teds, then?' And we never said anything of the kind.

"All we want to do is to take our music to a bigger audience than the one we've got now — but that doesn't mean we're turning our back on anyone. No matter how big we become we want to still be able to play places like the Southgate Royalty. We'd never cut off our roots."

Quite right too. Most painful that, I should think.

Matchbox are on the way up and striking out, but they're not yet so firmly established that they can afford to be wildly misrepresented in any publication that their present audience might read. Any hint of heathen tendencies could result in instant excommunication from the faithful masses.

See, Matchbox are one of a small but vigorous and expanding clique of British bands who are attempting to rejuvenate, either by imitation or by interpretation, the sort of music that was originally the southern states of the USA's white contribution to '50s rock 'n' roll — a music that, in its most stylised form, is known as Rockabilly.

As it happens, Matchbox are probably the least *specifically* rockabilly-orientated band of their type, which is one good reason why they're also arguably the best of their breed.

Rather than look back to one small transient aspect of musical history and simply Xerox it, they have delved deeper to explore earlier styles of music like the straight country of the '40s and early '50s, Western swing, the differing sounds emanating from Tennessee and Texas in that era and so forth — so that when they take an old Hank Williams tune and beef it up they arrive at a rockabilly sound in the same way, from the same direction, as the originators.

Similarly, their extensive repertoire of new songs — mainly composed by lead guitarist, mandolin, harmonica and banjo player Steve Bloomfield — stems from all these various influences. In fact it's not always apparent to the layman whether the band are playing new or borrowed material — especially as they often give the genuine oldies, most of which are pretty obscure anyway, a different musical slant to the originals.

Of course, there are certain rock'n'roll records that they make a point of copying, particularly some early Gene Vincent and Johnny Burnette Trio classics, "because there's no point in trying to change them around, you just can't top 'em" But they're not so impressed by the sudden glut of lesser mortals' recordings that have been unearthed to fill numerous compilation albums.

"Generally there are one or two good tracks and the rest is a load of old crap. Most of those things were never heard of in the first place because they were no good; now companies are releasing them to jump on the bandwagon. Still, there's one good thing about those albums: they've made a lot more people aware of the music. And that's what we're trying to do ourselves.

"We've reached a peak on the rock'n'roll circuit and although we love playing those gigs you can't go on doing the same round forever. We want to play to all types of audiences and the trouble is, a lot of people won't go to rock'n'roll clubs 'cause they think there'll be bovver, which is daft. There's no more likelihood of trouble than at any other type of gig. In fact at the Royalty they were telling us they have to double the bouncers on soul music nights.

"Anyway, we've been getting out and playing different kinds of venues, doing cabaret and colleges and all sorts and going down a storm. A year or so back we couldn't have done that; we'd have been classed as a '50s revival band. Now it's more accepted.

"We recently played a gig in Acton with a punk band in support. It was a really mixed crowd. There was a Rockabilly Rebel in the audience with a punk bird on his arm, there were skins, Teds, and they were all bopping and pogoing together. That's what it's all about. We're not punks and we haven't got any time whatsoever for punk music, but if they want to come and see us they're more than welcome.

"Give 'em a taste of real music."

THAT MAY SOUND fine and dandy, I counter, but we've had several letters at *NME* from punks or average punters who reckon they've been threatened, and in some cases done over, at rockabilly gigs. On top of which, I think a lot of people are suspicious of the racial and political attitudes of rockabilly fans.

"Oh not that again," they groan in unison. "Yeah, in the past we have been accused of being racialist, probably because of the redneck association of original rockabilly and because we use the Confederate flag on stage. But there are black Teds with Confederate flags who come to see us. It's nothing racial or political, it's simply a romantic image of where the music came from. We'd never perform those old heavy racialist country and western things; we're not into that.

"We've had a few Nazi types come down the Royalty, trying to get us involved. But we're just not interested. There's a particular couple of NF blokes who first came down looking straight; suits and short back 'n' sides and all that. Now they've got their hair slicked back and they're trying to pass themselves off as Teds. They're real phoney and everybody knows it.

"Please make it clear once and for all; we are *not* pro-National Front. We don't think politics has got *anything* to do with music at all. Rock'n'roll is about fast cars, women, drinking and having a good time. That's it, period. We don't wanna know about anything else."

Also amongst the anything else they don't wanna know about is an album called 'Riders In The Sky', which emerged on the Charly label last year and is credited to Matchbox. Cut in Holland over three days in November 1976, it's the first recordings of a substantially different group to the present line-up; only Steve Bloomfield and bassist Freddie Poke having made the grade through to the revitalised Matchbox.

With them in the present quintet are drummer Jimmie Redhead (another founder-member who got sidetracked before the Charly album but returned last year), rhythm guitarist Gordon Scott and lead vocalist Graham Fenton. Their Chiswick album 'Settin' the Woods On Fire" is a pretty good example of the band — but even that is no longer truly representative, they claim, and they're currently negotiating a new record deal to properly showcase their licks.

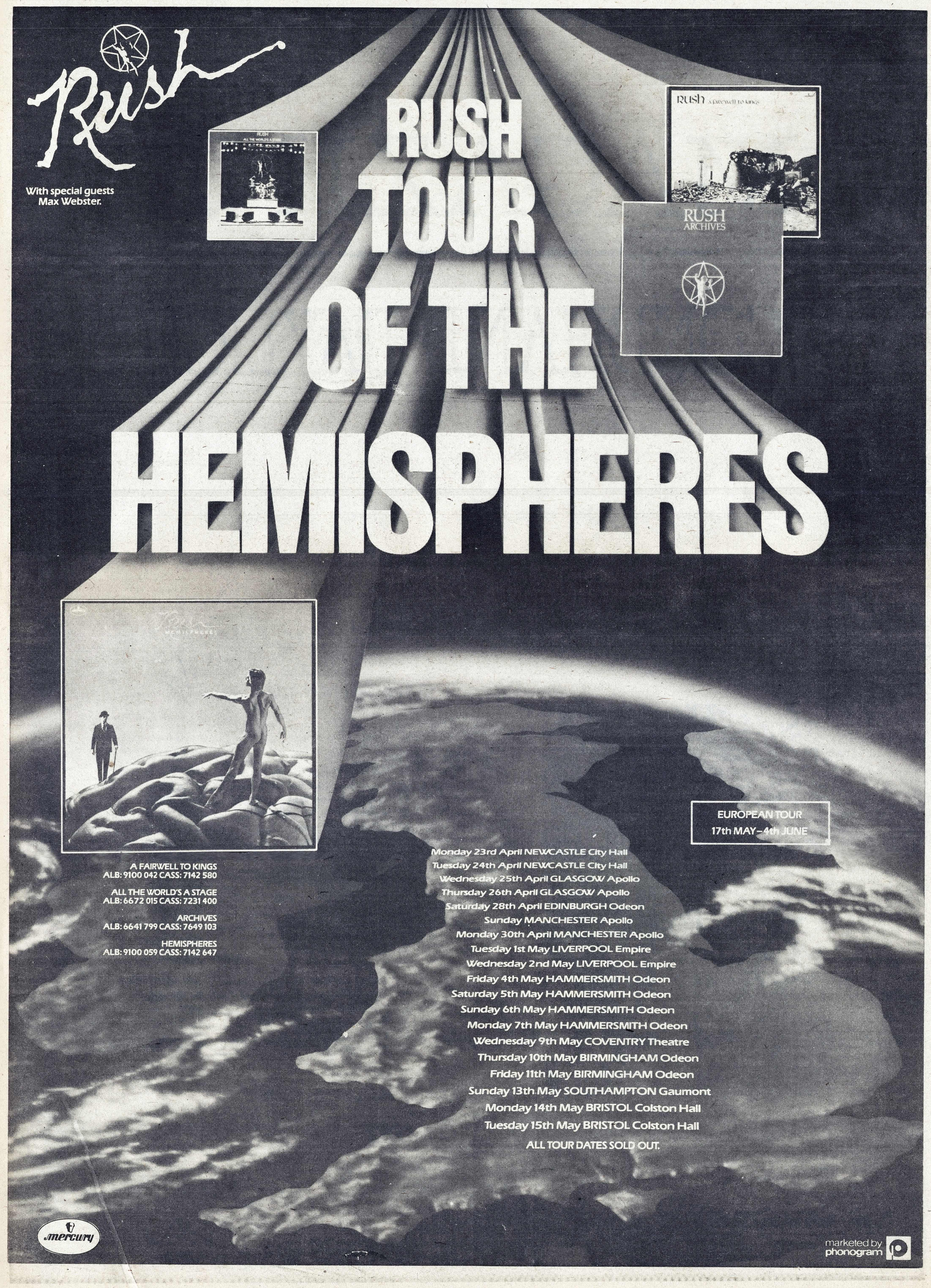
Meanwhile, they're the featured group in a 25-minute film documentary about rockabilly in Britain, *Born Too Late?*, directed by Robb Hart; they're pushing back their gigging frontiers for all they're worth; and they're looking to get some TV action.

"We'd like to get on the *Whistle Test.* We watch it almost every week in the hope that something decent's gonna be on it, but there never is. It's about time we went on and brought that show to life."

ENO MUSIC FOR AIRPORTS
ON AMBIENT RECORDS

Ambient Music must be able to accommodate many levels of listening attention without enforcing one in particular; it must be as ignorable as it is interesting.

Polydor ALBUM · CASSETTE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Tuesday 24th April NEWCASTLE City Hall
Wednesday 25th April GLASGOW Apollo
Thursday 26th April GLASGOW Apollo
Saturday 28th April EDINBURGH Odeon
Sunday MANCHESTER Apollo
Monday 30th April MANCHESTER Apollo
Tuesday 1st May LIVERPOOL Empire
Wednesday 2nd May LIVERPOOL Empire
Friday 4th May HAMMERSMITH Odeon
Saturday 5th May HAMMERSMITH Odeon
Sunday 6th May HAMMERSMITH Odeon
Monday 7th May HAMMERSMITH Odeon
Wednesday 9th May COVENTRY Theatre
Thursday 10th May BIRMINGHAM Odeon
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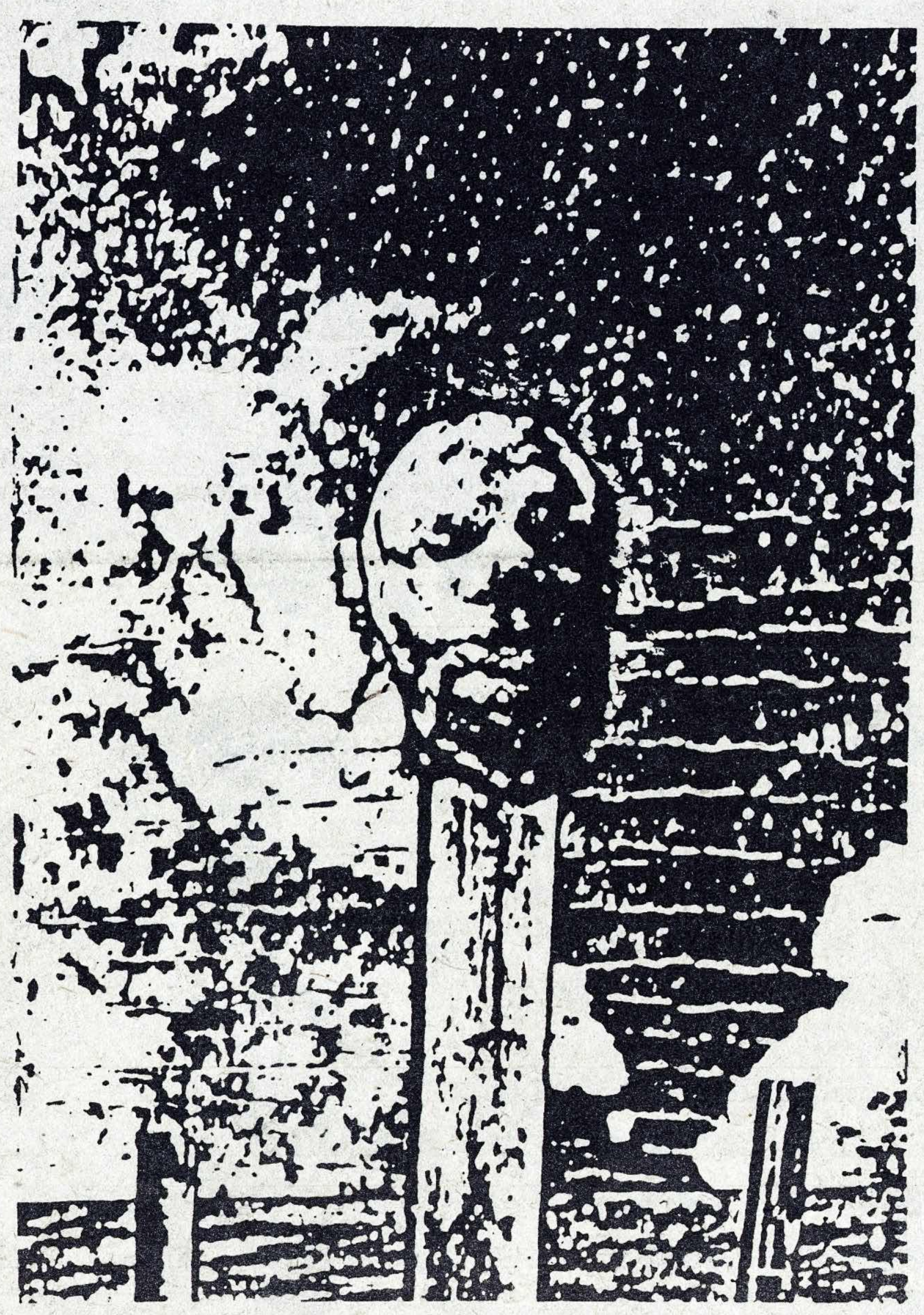
MAGAZINE

'SECONDHAND DAYLIGHT'

ALBUM

V2121 (CASSETTE TCV2121)

Virgin



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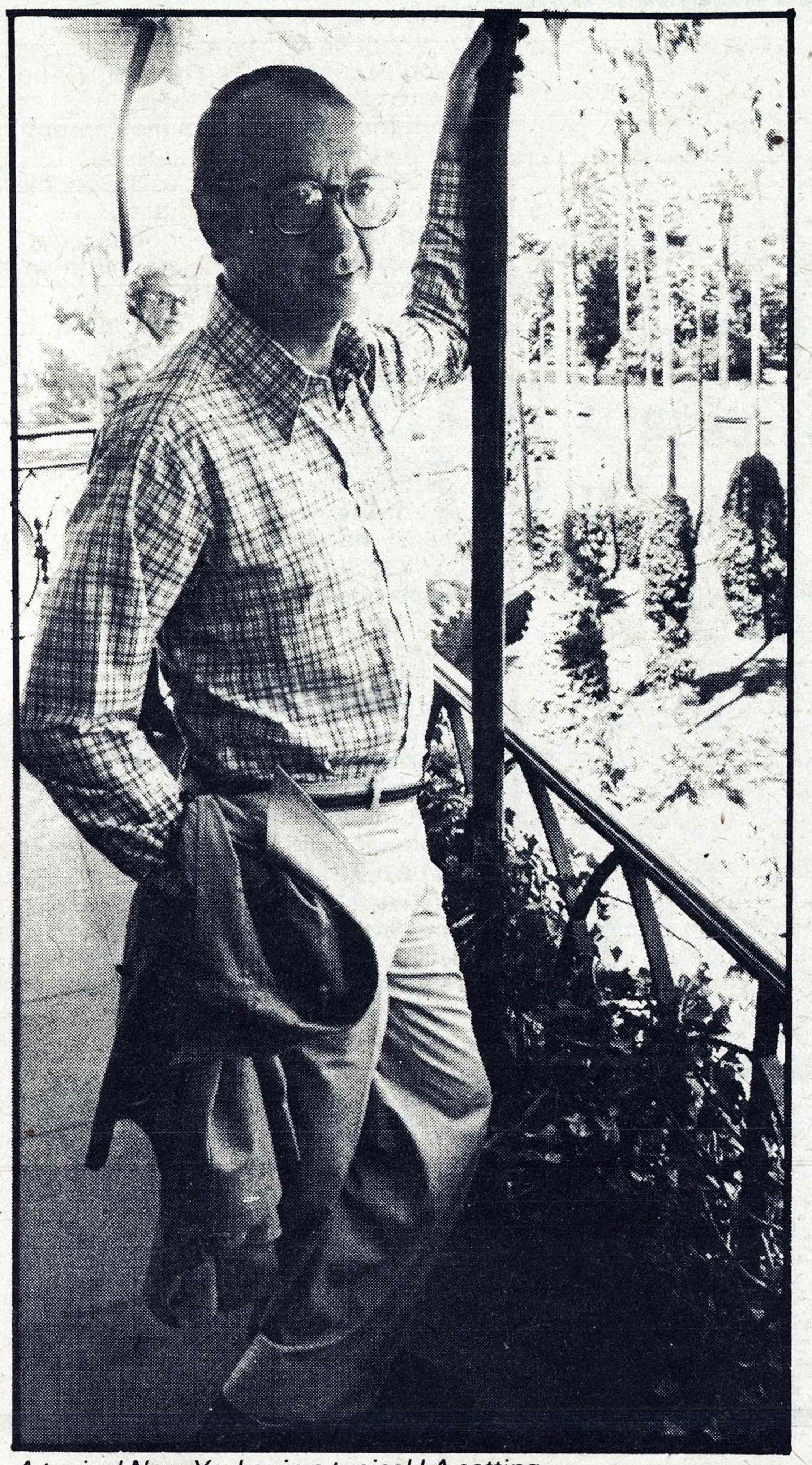
SPECIAL GUESTS

SIMPLE MINDS



A typical New Yorker in a typical LA setting

SILVER SCREEN

Neil Simon—not quite so simple

NEIL Simon is an astounding theatrical hit factory. Plays and musicals pour from his pen onto the Broadway stage where they have record-breaking runs and are then made into equally successful films.

In 18 years he has notched up 18 hits, including *The Sunshine Boys, The Odd Couple, The Goodby Girl* and now *California Suite* (reviewed in *Silver Screen* 31/3/79).

He is married to the actress Marsha Mason, earns 50,000 dollars a *week*, looks like an accountant and hates British theatre audiences.

"My musicals go down fine here and the plays are always well received by the critics but nobody goes to see them. I've given up trying to fathom British taste and I'm not going to allow any more of my plays to be performed here.

"All over Europe they do extremely well, they even like them in Japan, but here a long run is two months. That's about the length of time that it takes me to set a play up, casting and all, so it's just not worth my while anymore."

We will still be permitted to view his films however, as they do quite well, and since they crackle with a comedy rarely found on the screen they are usually worth a visit. *California Suite* for instance has some marvellous exchanges between Jane Fonda, the hard-bitten media woman from the East Coast and Alan Alda, her ex-husband now living a laid-back existence on the West Coast.

They succinctly capture the long-standing animosity between New York and Los Angeles and are rooted in Simon's own life. Three years ago he was sunk in gloom following the death of his wife of 20 years, from cancer. Then, in the space of a few months, he met and married a much younger actress, Marsha Mason, and — even more astonishing for a man who seemed to epitomise New York — moved to California.

"I am both Alda and Fonda," says Simon. "I've put down both cities and I also have strong affinity for each. The difference is that while New Yorkers are too sophisticated to care what you say about the city, People in Los Angeles are rather more touchy.

"No, I don't jog and I'm not a health food faddist but the tennis court is just across from my office and I try to play every day. Curiously enough I've become much more prolific since I've moved to California than I was in New York, where I never had any time for tennis as I was always working."

Like most people who are constantly being interviewed he has adopted a resigned attitude to some of the more ludicrous distortions of the media.

"One time a magazine was doing a profile on me and they asked a friend 'How does Neil Simon work?' He said that 'He works like a grocery clerk. He goes to work at the store each morning, works until five and then goes home.' When the piece finally came out it said that Neil Simon has the *face* of a grocery clerk.

"Now that quote follows me around. It's got to the stage where writers remark with interest that Neil Simon thinks that he has the face of a grocery clerk. Never believe what you read in the press."

Like all mythic transformations however, this one contains a core of truth. He could be a grocery clerk or possibly an accountant. He is a mild-looking man with horn-rimmed glasses and a slightly receding hair-line.

A hint of the harsh perceptions that must fuel that electric dialogue and lie behind that mild exterior came when I asked him about humour. To begin with it is like most discussions about humour, earnest and without a hint of a laugh. He preferred people who had a sense of humour and thought that those without it were opinionated and narrow minded. "Humour," he says, "is being able to see something from another point of view." Undoubtedly true, but that begs the central question of why one point of view is funny when another is not. Things which were horrible at the time, he says, could be funny afterwards.

Fonda and Alda sweat it out in California Suite.

When I ask him whether he ever spun out the scintilating dialogue of his characters, the acid comes out.

"I do talk like that," he says, "when I'm with someone who is bright and on the same wavelength".

That puts me firmly in my place, as our exchange has been noticeably quip-free.

"I enjoy making people laugh when it's appropriate, but on a day-to-day basis you'd have to be some kind of a nut to want to be funny all the time."

What about comedians who often keep up a flow of gags both on and off stage?

"It's true that most of the comedians that I know in America are 'on' all the time. The laugh is their life blood. That's not true for me. A laugh is good in the right situation but I don't live or die by it."

If the press and professional comics don't stand in very high regard, critics don't fare much better.

"The thing with a multiple choice play like *California Suite* is that all the rviews are different. When the play opened in New York some said that the bits that Matthau played in the film were the weakest. Others said that they were the funniest thing since Feydeau. In fact, they were the thing that kept the play running on Broadway. The rest was a bit sophisticated for them. On the other hand, I think that the more serious bits with Jane Fonda and Maggie Smith work better in the film.

"But then a lot of young people seem to really like the Richard Pryor and Bill Cosby sequence, which is very knockabout. So I just say 'Take your pick folks, it's all from your own point of view'.

"Nobody ever likes *California Suite* overall. It's the same if you ask someone if they like what you are wearing and they say 'Yeah, it's fine'. Then you push them and say 'But do you *really* like it?' and finally they say 'Well I'm not mad about your shoes'. You know, there's always something."

Ignoring Press and critics alike, his tennis-stimulated output is awe-inspiring. Four weeks ago a new musical by him opened on Broadway called *They're Playing Our Song*.

"Each time I sit down to write I feel like a novice. I have a mounting sense of panic and wonder what all those rules were that I put up on my desk the last time."

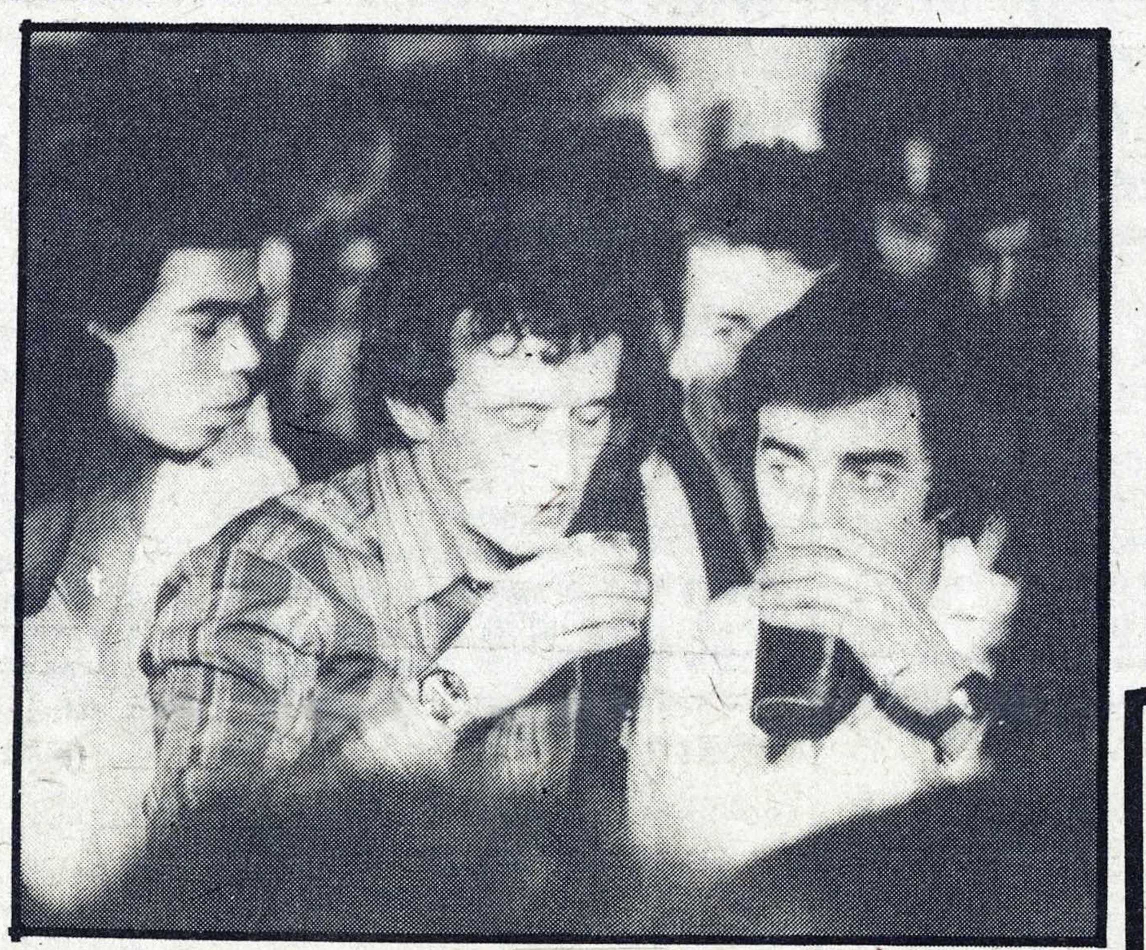
It's a panic how that he seems always to overcome and anyone fired by *California Suite* to see a Neil Simon in the grease paint, as it were, need only go to Dublin where his embargo does not apply.

The Irish, it seems, have proved far more appreciative and *Chapter Two* has been running there for the last five months.

Jerome Burne

Nighthawks

Directed by Ron Peck and Paul Hallam
Starring Ken Robertson
(Cinegate)



Nighthawks: Pernod shandies and gin fizzies all round.

BBC-2's Best Of British series — re-running the classic domestic dramas which invigorated our cinema of the '60s — has highlighted the paucity of contemporary films dealing with British cultural sensibilities. Have there been any worthwhile films of social concern since Jack Gold's *The Reckoning* (with Nicol Williamson) or Lindsay Anderson's *If . . .* and *O Lucky Man!?*

If mainstream cinema has backed off potentially controversial issues, there are low-budget, underground films taking up the challenge: *Nighthawks*, for example, a film about homosexuals in London.

It proved a nightmare to make — largely because finance was so difficult to raise — and it's sad that a substantial part of the backing eventually had to come from German television. (Which has since shown the film, very successfully; can't imagine that happening on our Whitehouse-proscribed airwaves).

It is currently packing them in at the Gate, Notting Hill — a logical venue, since it's featured twice in the film itself. Indeed, *Nighthawks* seems to have created its own following. With so many club and disco scenes, at least half the audience must be there in the expectation of seeing themselves on screen.

Will it do as well in Rotherham?

Apparently, it was originally conceived as a broad-based study of gay life, but ultimately it proved more practical to isolate one central character. He is Jim, a geography teacher at an inner London comprehensive. By day he assesses the problems of over-population in India, and by night he threads his way through crowded bars and sweaty discos.

He sleeps around, looking for that elusive permanent relationship, but suffering life's standard frustrations along the way (being stood-up, feeling unloved, etc.). One feels, however, that he has managed to reconcile the two halves of his life quite successfully, until crunch point is reached when his kids get wind of his proclivities, and appreciate that India would have fewer problems if there were more like him.

There are interesting examples of social conventions being flouted (in a pub, he drinks martini, while his female teaching colleague has half a bitter) and a fair quota of amusing touches. One of those whom Jim beds is an 18-year-old fresh down from Bolton, and living in a flat with three lusty mates. He hasn't told them he's gay. "With them, it's all football, booze and birds. It's bad enough not liking the first two . . ."

The few faults that *Nighthawks* has derive from its loosely-structured format, and its absence of real dramatic content. It is also too long, and I was baffled as to why one crucial conversation took place during a car-ride up the M1 to Scratchwood service station.

However, since it was shot under very difficult conditions, such criticisms are carping. It is without doubt an illuminating and sympathetic portrayal of life for (supposedly) emancipated gays in the '70s.

A labour of love, presumably, and a rare and moving document.

Bob Woffinden

OUTSIDE A discotheque in the basement of the Hilton Hotel in Dusseldorf, two British touring musicians are discussing the prospects for the night's festivities.

"I suppose," says one, "there's really nowhere else to go."

"I'm not keen, though," says the second. "The noise inside there will be pretty intolerable."

"Shall we go back to the rooms, then?" proposes the first.

"I think we should," says the second. "I hate loud music."

And off these sensitive souls trot. Plump, balding and middle-aged, preferring a night's sleep to the pleasures of German night-life.

Who, you might ask, are these fellows?

Members perhaps of some dinosaur heavy rock band left over from the '60s? Hardly. Not even the likes of Yes or Jethro Tull would wear roll-neck sweaters in public.

In fact this odd couple aren't rock musicians at all. They're on tour with Mike Oldfield. They're proper musicians.

Mike Oldfield, His Orchestra, Chorus and Bodhran are carting themselves round Europe, dispensing renditions of Oldfield's epics.

Oldfield, you may recall, is the hippie recluse who made his name and fortune as an infant protege with the instrumental work 'Tubular Bells'.

An oddball genius, he would afterwards squat in his mansion in remote countryside and engage in solitary pleasures in his home recording studio. Mike liked to work with machines but people were another matter. He'd rarely venture out, and when he did, he'd flee back to his hideaway after but a small sample of the outside world.

But last year he underwent a personality change, while on a therapy course involving a process called Exegisis and became a gregarious playboy instead.

The world no longer intimidates him. Certainly not in Berlin, anyway. In Berlin, Mike Oldfield is posing for a photo session by the Wall. With the Brandenburg Gate in the background, he leans languidly against a barrier. The Wall is arguably one of the world's nastiest symbols of oppression — but Mike doesn't see it that way.

As he leans, he whistles a jolly tune.

What do you think of the Wall, Mike?

"Wonderful," says Mike.

Are you serious?

"It's tremendous."

Don't you find it horrible?

"No. People shut themselves off from one another even when they're together. At least this is out in the open. You may find it oppressive, but I don't."

He saunters off in cheerfully casual manner.

There were sceptics who suspected Mike's new personality would soon flounder. That he'd never get on tour. That the logistics and the people would frighten him off.

But nothing could be further from the truth.

Two days before the Berlin encounter, Mike won a noisy ovation from a crowd of 2,000 chanting Germans in Dusseldorf.

The principal reason his show works is the new-found confidence. As a result, he does amazingly extrovert things like smiling at the audience, conducting the orchestra with his head, waving his guitar about and sporting dark glasses for some guitar heroics.

Hardly a threat to The Tubes, but for him it's pretty wild.

This is the first time Oldfield has taken his music on tour, and as spectacles go it's on a par with watching a tortoise wake after 20 years' hibernation.

MIKE OLDFIELD reflecting on mental and physical barriers. Pic: JILL FURMANOVSKY

Tubular Tortoise Leaves Shell

MIKE OLDFIELD, former eccentric recluse turned eccentric extrovert, makes his live-on-stage debut with some heads-down Tubular Bells boogie. BOB EDMANDS looks on amazed.

After the first lettuce leaf, the novelty wears thin. But unlike tortoises, Oldfield makes music. So while he's even less fun to watch than the picture disc of 'Tubular Bells', he's certainly very impressive to hear.

THE FIRST half of the show is devoted to his latest album 'Incantations', and this is admittedly pretty dull. Most of the themes seem four times as long as they need to be. Particularly tedious is a vocal rendition of Longfellow's poem 'Hiawatha', performed by Maddy Prior — no less — in person.

Things perk up, though, with Oldfield's guitar breaks. He can make a guitar sound like a flute or a trumpet, and his duets with a flautist and a trumpeter provide interesting moments.

The second half of the show is infinitely stronger — a re-vamped 'Tubular Bells' and a majestic version of Oldfield's "disco" single 'Guilty'.

The German audience go suitably rabid for 'Tubular Bells', and Oldfield has beefed up the piece a lot, making it even more impressive than the original.

Essentially, it's full of musical jokes. Bits of funk, fusion and disco have been incorporated. There's even a powerful heavy rock sequence with Oldfield and his two fellow guitarists getting their heads down with a hint of Status Quo.

Our man says he was fed up with 'Bells' the way it was, and is allowing other musicians more of a say.

"When it was performed live originally, he explains, "I had total control over everybody — and that was terrible, so now I've taken that off and this is the result."

But isn't it like doing the 1812 Overture, for example, with less cannons?

"No. In fact, it's like doing the 1812 Overture with *more* cannons.

"The original version of the record reflected the fact that I didn't have enough money to do it properly. I had to do everything myself."

Doing it properly on tour is clearly an expensive business. Apart from employing dozens of musicians, Oldfield has bought costly studio microphones for each orchestral instrument, flown in pricey studio engineers from New York and at one point had a computer to help with the mixing.

The sound, though, is of the highest quality you'll probably ever hear at a rock gig.

Oldfield says the most difficult aspect of the tour is: "People — but they're also the easiest thing, too.

"People are very complicated machines — to get them to do what you want you have to be very careful. You have to behave towards them in a very definite sequence.

"One minute you've got to say: 'This is the way it's got to be. You're fired.' The next minute you've got to be saying: 'Please do it for me. Please, *please*.'

"You have to let them know you're capable of being tough. And you must also make them self-motivated — then they'll want to do the best for themselves."

Oldfield's approach to the people problem may seem a little cold-blooded. A text-book account of how to manipulate other human beings. Except that he's brave enough to talk about the process in a way that more timid people might side-step.

"I had to realise at one point that I was going too far in one direction," says Oldfield. "I was getting resentment."

You were being too heavy-handed?

"Yes, and people started being unco-operative. But having gone that far, it was all right to go so much more the other way."

There's a suspicion of this kind of manipulation about the Berlin gig. As a show, it has a little more momentum than the one in Dusseldorf. 'Incantations' seems a mite shorter and less drab, and 'Tubular Bells' moves a mite closer to heavy rock.

Oldfield and guitarists Nicko Ramsden and Phil Beer could clearly have a big future on the American rock circuit — provided they dump the orchestra, that is.

DURING THE set, however, there's more than a degree of paranoia among the press party. This is because Oldfield has invited the scribes up onstage during 'The Sailor's Hornpipe' to encourage the audience to clap along. Personally, I'd have thought the sight of a crowd of stumbling hacks would have *dis*couraged applause, but that's just my view. There's some uneasy laughter and nervous giggles among us cheerleaders as we wait to go on.

Are we being set up? Will it be custard pies? Buckets of water?

Maybe it's just a cheap ploy to get a good review by making the journalists part of the show.

Maybe he's making the point that rock critics are just frustrated performers who'll grab at any opportunity to get into the spotlight.

But can we refuse? We cannot.

On we rush, inkstained and beery. Attempting to disguise our rabid eagerness with disclaiming, wry expressions.

Faces in the audience below seem unmoved by the spectacle, as, sports jackets-a-go-go, we wave our arms furiously in the air.

Will they love us or hate us?

Why aren't they clapping, the ungrateful bastards?

We've sacrificed our dignity and our carefully nurtured world-weary cool, and all they have to do is applaud.

The faces and the bands in the front rows remain unmoved.

'Sailor's Hornpipe' ends very briskly, but before time, as this kind of thing can be a bit tiring.

The applause is tumultuous. Overwhelming. We stumble unwillingly away. A big success. Maybe a couple more numbers, Mike?

Mike Oldfield prides himself on being a bit of a prankster these days. During an interview, he'll run round the reporter in fast circles, stop to give his answers and then run on again while the next question is being asked.

On the other hand, he may choose to sneak from up behind and mess with the switches on the journalist's cassette player.

All the while, he's grinning widely and laughing impishly.

I wonder how his employees cope with all this.

You can *afford* to indulge yourself, I say.

"I do," says the new Mike Oldfield, *"I do."*

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15th Keele University.
16th Sheffield Polytechnic.
17th Lafayette, Wolverhampton.
18th West Runton Pavillion.
23rd **THE VENUE, LONDON.**
24th The Hamilton Club, Birkenhead.
25th The Mayfair, Newcastle.

TAKING TYNE-AGE WASTELAND BY STRATOCASTER

(Well, Les Paul actually, but it doesn't have the same ring, does it?)

BUT ENOUGH of Newcastle, let's take the cab down to uptown South Shields, to its Tyne Dock area and the home of Jimmy Pursey proteges The Angelic Upstarts — the Sham of the North.

A rough district? Not much. You can tell the cissies round here — they're the ones with two ears. It's essential Geordie territory, permanent hard times, tough and proud of its traditions.

All in all the natural breeding ground for a band like the Upstarts.

In a region where musical tastes have tended to range from heavy metal to heavy metal, the group have built themselves a fanatical following, broad-based though mainly punk and skinhead, a genuine Upstart Army and, into the bargain, they've landed an albatross of a reputation for trouble.

To the local media's shock-horror merchants they're never The Angelic Upstarts, always "The Bad Boys Of The North-East". But to the youth of South Shields and beyond the Upstarts are something else: the best and bravest torch-bearers of punk, a coarse and glorious vindication of all that movement was meant to be about — and that's a million miles from stagnant Seditionaries, the poisonous looking-glass pond of London "new wave".

To me the Upstarts are the real and living thing: guaranteed 100 per cent pose-proof and bullshit-free.

To Warner Brothers Records, on the other hand, they're a new signing, caught on the rebound from Polydor who, as distributors for Pursey's cherished venture JP Productions, refused to handle the group following an incident involving snowballs, sundry Angelics and a Polydor- person ..."If we'd been Rod Stewart and punched the security guard they'd have sacked the security guard, not us!"). It was this affair, on top of Sham 69's own problems, which prompted Pursey to take the entirely reasonable step of stomping on a Radio One presentation silver disc.

This month saw the release of The Angelic Upstarts' first 'proper' record (its predecessor being a 500-pressing of 'The Murder Of Liddle Towers' on Small Wonder) produced, like the up-and-coming debut album, by JP himself. It's 'I'm An Upstart', a neat introduction to the brutal charms of the group's sound.

Like all their material the song is earthy and direct, played with the maximum ferocity and the minimum finesse — though the contributions of guitarist Mond are always interesting even if unambitious.

Fronting the outfit, the burly crop-topped Mensi supplies the kind of voice that could take could take on the Kop, and his is the personality which shapes the Upstarts' appeal.

While Mond and Mensi (or, if you prefer, Raymond Cowie and Thomas Mensforth) write the songs and tend to do the talking, bass-player Steve provides far more than just a butt for in-band jokes, as does young Sticks the drummer. Self-confessed "one-take wonders", they're confident that Pursey's production work can capture the crudely ecstatic anarchy of the group's performances.

"Aa doan't want anything clever," Mensi declares. "Aa won't see our band develop into a fuckin' Genesis! If we start getting clever then I think I'll pack it in because the more basic your music is the more feeling you can get to it."

And it's true there's no apparent danger of sophistication creeping into the Upstarts' music for the foreseeable future. But that's not to say the group don't make for a highly interesting proposition, as intriguing as it's exciting.

THEIRS IS the classic punk history, as Mensi relates: "The thing that really got me was The Buzzcocks' 'Spiral Scratch': that EP was brilliant. Then I saw The Clash on the White Riot tour and I thought, Jesus Christ, I can do that. Any kids can do it, get a Woolworth's guitar, couple of amps, anyone can do it. That's what I like about it — that's the whole idea."

But from there on it got more complicated. Their uncompromising defiance — evidenced in rebel-rousing gems like 'Police' and 'We Are The People' — made them roots-heroes for thousands of kids outside and inside Her Majesty's Prisons. But it also drew the predictable hostility of the powers-that-be.

Matters came to a head with the release of 'The Murder Of Liddle Towers' — marking the band's commitment to the Tyneside campaign for justice for the man who died from injuries received in police custody. The Towers case, which also inspired TRB's 'Blue Murder' and the Dave Goodman/Pistols collaboration 'Justifiable Homicide', has entered local folklore, amd all the official denials put together seem to lack the popular impact of Liddle's pathetic epitaph, "If I've done anything I'm sorry, but please leave me alone."

Since that time, the Upstarts have found life awkward in various subtle and unsubtle ways: drink licences are refused, club-owners won't take them for obscure reasons, small fights at gigs become major riots in the press. The Northumbria police may yet bring a charge of "incitement to violence" against the group, but Mensi is unrepentant.

"They're just trying to harass us. They're trying to finish us but they never will.

"Don't think there's any way I'm against law and order. You've got to have it. There's nobody has got more respect for an honest copper than me; it's just that from my experiences . . I haven't met any. To me a bent copper is worse than a criminal — and I've seen a few fucking bent ones."

For all that the band are unanimous in rejecting any 'political' tags. They don't go looking for causes; they deal in gut reactions, spit out contempt for what they believe they see around them and live with everyday.

The same goes for their involvement in the recent Rock Against Racism tour.

"That's something we believe in; it's gotta be. Like you read the other week in *Melody Maker* . . . they call me a thug, they call me a cunt," (not a verbatim quote from the old *MM,* that, surely), "but I know the difference between Right and Wrong — and RAR is *right."*

Right. Most of all, I like the Upstarts because they've never grasped the golden rule of showbiz agitprop: "Strike every conceivable posture but one — never stick your neck out."

MILITANT ENTERTAINMENT. Far from dragging the dead burden of "meaningfulness", the Upstarts' set erupts in a wild, spontaneous rush of joy and outrage.

Finding every gig in Newcastle closed to them, the group's manager Keith Bell has secured a hall for the evening in their very own South Shields, and 400 kids surge in for a triumphant home-town show. With the house-lights down the crowd is drowned in the curdling sound of a wailing siren and the sickly glare of a flashing blue light.

And when the Upstarts start it's amateurish, uncontrolled and manic — but great. It's also intensely powerful, but not the calculatedly manipulative power of heavy metal. Something else. Here, the barriers are well and truly down; kids swarm over the stage, perched on speakers or arms-over-shoulders with the band, ten to a microphone.

As everyone in the hall is aware, the local lads are making good and on the brink of Bigger Things. But as for tonight: "As you see us now," Mensi roars over the pandemonium, "we will always be the same! We will never be pop stars!"

From 'Borstal Breakout' for Jimmy Pursey, to Cliff Richard's 'The Young Ones' as you've never heard it before, the set bowls along like there's no tomorrow.

Then a lull: the crowd takes up a chilling terraces sing-song, "We all agree . . . Liddle Towers was murdered." That's what you call a cue for a song, and the group smash right into it, building the tension with thrashing instrumental overkill as Mensi gives voice to the anger that seems to infuse the whole hall — climaxing in the now-ritual attack on a severed pig's head.

Not that the police are singled out. There's 'Student Power' — *"Student power/Fucking shower"* — and the anti-military 'Tommy Never Again'. If someone's bothering Mensi, he tends to let them know about it.

Really it's no surprise that Jimmy Pursey came to regard The Angelic Upstarts as the spirit of his projected record label: they are the Sham ideal realised. Raw, uncomplicated, unselfconscious fun that's rooted in reality instead of Disneyland escapism or "avant-garde" obscurity, transforming frustration into exhilaration.

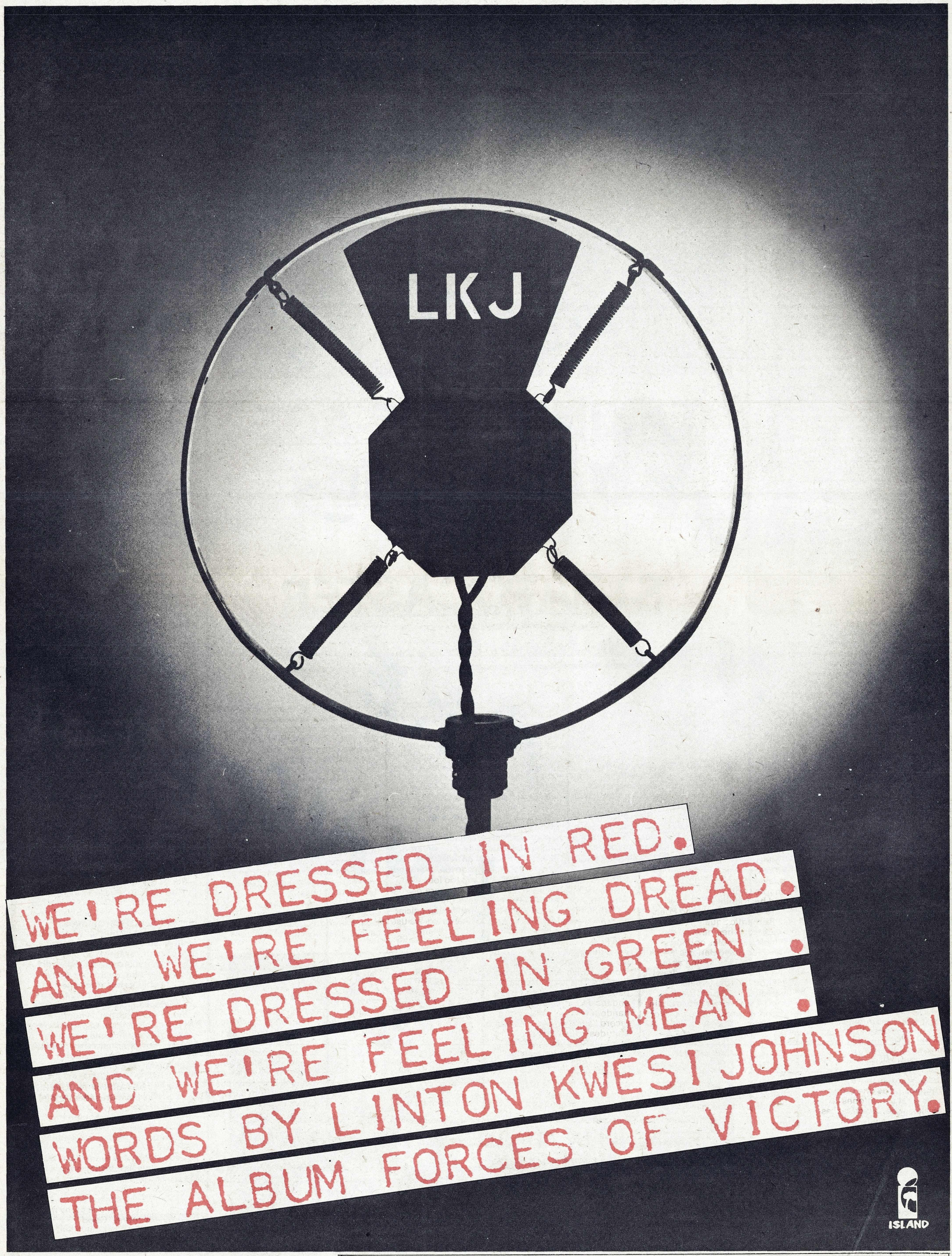
After serving their brief, unhappy apprenticeship at Polydor the band are not looking back. Life at Warners is hunky-dory thus far, though they're cautiously aware that "if we make a mess of this one, we're fucked." For JP himself they display an irreverent respect, born of gratitude for his perseverence on their behalf, and an utter trust that Pursey and Sham manager Tony Gordon will see them safely around the rockbiz pitfalls which lie ahead.

And after the ball was over the lights went on and the kids filed out into the night. I glanced down to the floor. Nestling in the beer-cans and fag-ends there was the pig's head, smiling at me as it awaited the caretaker's dustbin.

Very Angelic (L-R): Steve Forsten, Mensi, Sticks, Mond.

Words: PAUL DU NOYER

Pictures: JILL FURMANOVSKY



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ZEBULON DESIGN

SINGLES

SINGLE OF THE WEEK (1)
PENETRATION: Danger Signs (Virgin). A big black 12-incher in an opulently bleak modern sleeve, 'Danger Signs' find Penetration sounding uncannily like Blue Oyster Cult back when they were good and the ineffable Pauline exuding all the deadpan menace of Grace Slick back when *she* was good. Quietly unsettling in a thunderous sort of way, 'Danger Signs' boasts a loopy, flash guitar solo, a serpentine melody and an impressive hint of reserve power. People who don't like Penetration (or — more accurately — people who used to like Penetration before they got successful) are fond of accusing them of having gone Heavy Metal, but 'Danger Signs' remains simultaneously untainted by either flatulent pomposity or mindless thrashing, two of the most prominent characteristics of bad HM.

An excellent contemporary rock record, and by comparison with most of the mouldy creme eggs prevalent in this slice of the festive season, some kind of masterpiece. If you can't find a 12" version, don't fret none. Buy the 7" and TURN THE SUCKER UP.

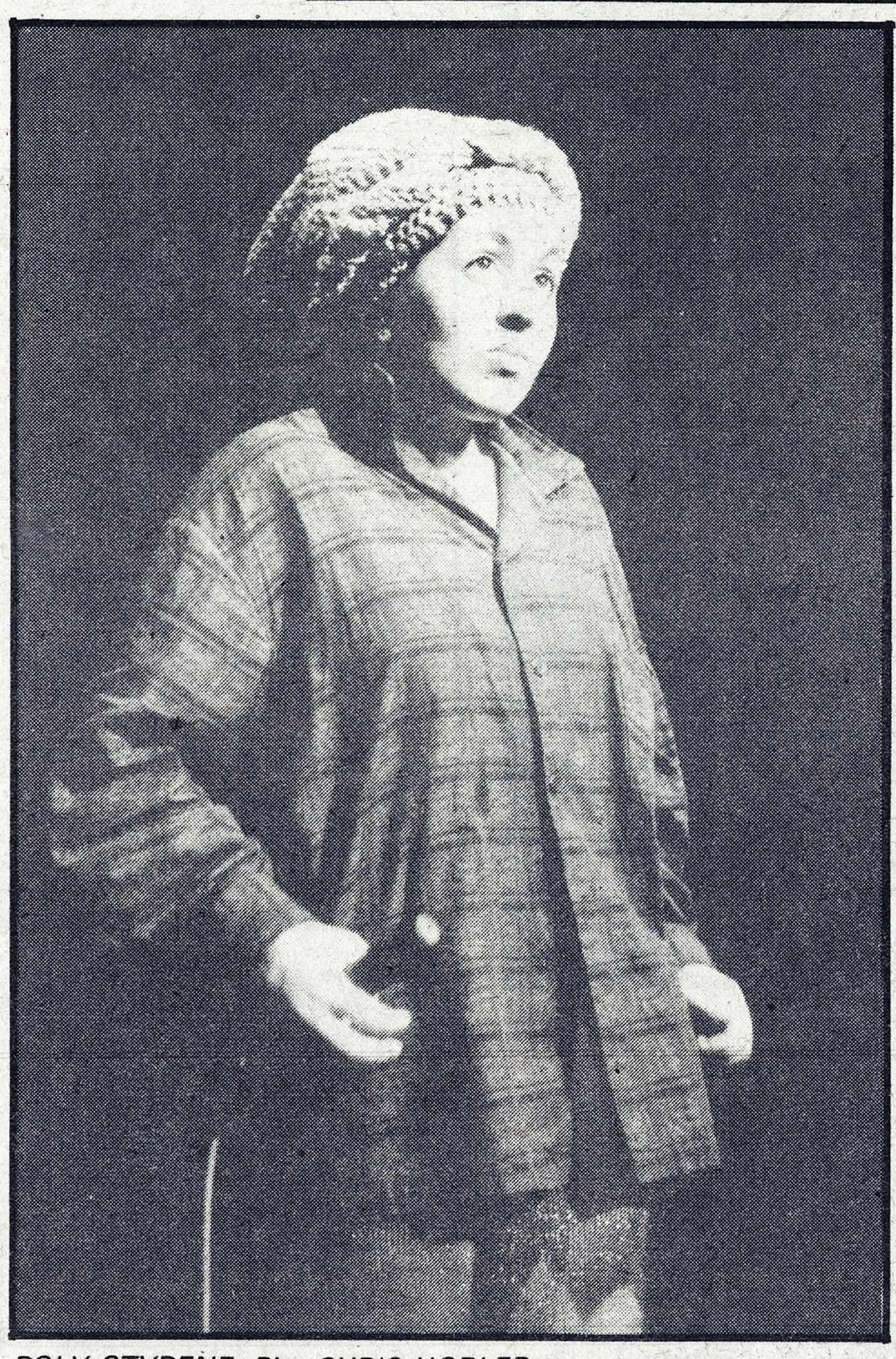
SINGLE OF THE WEEK (2)
FOXY: Hot Number (TK Disco Import). This week's singles pile is positively crawling with large platters featuring sproinging bass lines, too many keyboards for their own good and helpful suggestions as to what you can do with your body for fun, profit and increased social status. Foxy are presumably some gaggle or other of Miami hotshots, and 'Hot Number' is just that: a dance groove with an ass-shaped seal of approval, a rough, dirty noise rather than the kind of funky cotton candy dolloped over most of the week's disco records and — praise be to the Vishanti — a song of some sort in there amidst the rattles, boings, bleeps and grunts.

Warning: the lyrics are probably sexist, but I haven't deciphered enough of them yet to be able to make a definite assessment. It clocks in at 6'02" and I guarantee you'll dance all the way through. This guarantee is non-redeemable at any record shop stocking import 45s.

SINGLE OF THE WEEK (3)
GARY MOORE: Parisian Walkways (MCA). This is either a very slight song padded out with long guitar solos or an instrumental with occasional vocal interruptions. Since the guitar is better than the voices (supplied by Phil Lynott and Moore himself) I prefer to think of it as the latter. A slow, gracefully unfolding 3 a.m. job full of thick, creamy sustained Les Paul notes, it could be an 'Albatross' around Mr Moore's neck, or at the very least, a radio hit for the spring. Your parents would like it if they were in the habit of staying up late and getting stoned.

IGNORE THE ABOVE: THE REAL SINGLE OF THE WEEK
X-RAY SPEX: Highly Inflammable (EMI International). Curse me for a novice! One lives, one learns and one grows more complicated as one grows older (that's four 'ones' in one sentence, which makes five). As the music gets smoother, the lyrics get nastier and Poly Styrene gets her fingers into the meat more and more firmly.

'Highly Inflammable' boasts a sound so smooth that you could spread it straight from the fridge: floating, gliding, light, creamy... The sax is the clean end of the '50s (it's getting easier to tell which instrumentalist runs the rehearsals), the acoustic guitars make Crosby Stills and Nash sould like Sham 69 and the synth lines are pure soft ice cream. As it hums along, Poly carols innocently,



POLY STYRENE. Pic: CHRIS HORLER

PAULINE PENETRATION. Pic: STEVENSON.

Records For Wishing There Was A Ramones Single Released This Week To...

"Supreme equality/we used to compete/the right to decide/is denied to the sheep . . . influenced by the fashion pages?/influenced by others' phases?"

The most subversively commercial Spex single, 'Highly Inflammable' means that — more than ever — Poly Styrene is to be underestimated and patronised strictly at your own risk. Don't just buy it; *listen* to it.

IT'S GONNA BE A LONG HOT BUMMER FROM NOW ON

THE ONLY ONES: Out There In The Night (CBS). This 12" blue vinyl three-tracker is so collectable that it's almost a shame to play it. In fact, why pussyfoot around? It *is* a shame to play it. Peter Parrott and his friends exude their aura of Doomed Young Poets In Romantic Squalour over a track from their new elpee which resembles nothing so much as Steve Harley's 'Make Me Smile' (something about the way Parrott's effete drawl blends with the female vocalists on the chorus, I guess). John Perry once again demonstrates that he's one of the finest guitarists of 1969 and — wait for this — BOTH SIDES OF THEIR LIMITED EDITION INDEPENDENT DEBUT SINGLE appear on the flip.

I warn you, one listen and you'll be out there buying a pair of leather trousers and a bagful of cheap make-up. A real breakthrough in more ways than one.

BONEY M: Hooray Hooray It's A Holi-Holiday (Atlantic). More folk dance music from the most successful salespeople of nursery rhymes since Paul McCartney. This record will be completely inescapable for the next three months. Even taking a holiday to escape won't help, since the damn thing will follow you wherever you go. Oddly moving.

THE UNDERTONES: Jimmy Jimmy (Sire). 'Rebel Rebel' meets 'I'm A Boy'. Tremulous and charming.

CASH PUSSIES: 99% Is Shit (The Label). This opens up with THE ACTUAL VOICE OF SID VICIOUS mumbling about how the general public are scum, and then moves into The Pussies hissing something semi-comprehensible about *'London town where the Jews all pray'*. This is apparently a parody of 'Belsen Was A Gas' and the accompanying handout tells us that the record "sums up Sid's life and attitudes". The title not only sums up Sid's views of humanity (and humanity's views on Sid) but describes the record more than adequately. It's nice of Fred and Judy Vermorel to condemn the vultures surrounding the Sid Industry before they actually join in with said industry. C'mon wild youth — buy this record and SHOW US WHERE YOU STAND!

RENAISSANCE: The Winter Tree (Warner Bros). I don't know about you, but I'm sick of what passes for modern rock these days. Why can't people make records about what's really important to young people these days, like trees and philosophy? Why can't we have well-brought-up young women with classically trained voices singing nicely and clearly instead of all this incoherent shouting? Why can't they use nice acoustic guitars instead of those horrible Stratocasters turned up too loud? Why can't we have more *nice* records like this one? What happened to sensible musicians with beards like we used to have?

ALICIA BRIDGES: Body Heat (Polydor). I guess it's unfair to expect the white-haired wonder to top 'Night Life' *just like that*, and this one is certainly no disgrace, but it's a little short on magic (you remember 'magic', doncha? It's what drunks always say their favourite football teams are). A nice blend of rock and roll textures and disco rhythms with a tough vocal and some useful guitars, it fulfils its function for the statutory 5'20" and is approximately 12" across.

BOMBERS: (Everybody) Get Dancin' (Flamingo). Is this value or what? The A-side runs for an interminable 9'20" (with another 7 minutes on the flip), it's a foot wide, it's pressed on ghastly Lucozade-coloured vinyl, the rhythm section work incredibly hard and there's a whole bunch of people telling you to dance all the way through just in case you thought it was music to pick lint out of your navel to. What more do you want from a record?

TINA TURNER: Sometimes When We Touch (UA). There must be some reason why people record a song like this. Could it be because they deal with meaningful relationships in a responsible manner? Could it be because they're what being in love is all about? Could it be because they sell? (No, but keep trying).

MELBA MOORE: Pick Me Up, I'll Dance (Epic). Nice to know that the old female stereotypes are finally breaking down.

ZIPPER: The Life Of Riley (Spanking). Cardiff leaps into the independent label race with a jolly/sardonic chune reminiscent of Ray Davies in his pop sociology bag. Deserving of wider attention than it'll probably receive (available from 53 Severn Grove, Canton, Cardiff).

THE MUTANTS: Hard Time (Rox). Three-track red thing from a Liverpool band halfway between HM and NW. Honest guitars and affected vocals, and better-produced than the average DIY job.

ADRIAN MUNSEY: Lost Sheep (Virgin). I've lost the press handout, so therefore I have no idea why anyone would want to record, release or buy a record featuring sheep baaing against a pastoral orchestral background. Virgin retain credibility in the English Eccentrity division, and I await enlightenment. Mind you, I've been awaiting enlightenment since mid-1951 and sod all's arrived.

STEVE GIBB: She Believes In Me (Epic). This is *not* an as-yet unknown Gibb brother dug out of an ice-floe in Outer Mongolia by Russian trawlermen. Rather it is a Nashville-based composer whose songs "have redefined musical sensitivity and incorporate all the romantic and mellow feelings we all experience at one time or another". (I know this for a fact because I've got a note from CBS telling me so). The record is excruciatingly horrible.

THE DICKIES: Banana Splits (A&M). I'm really glad punk came along and blew away all the shallow, exploitative, cynical crap that's been infesting the record business for so long. Aren't you?

JUSTIN HAYWARD: Marie (Decca). Justin Hayward has sold so many units for Decca Records that the least he could expect would be that they'd spell his name right on the press handout. Instead, Decca's press office refers to the hapless sap as "Justin HayWOOD" no less than four times. And after he played all the instruments on the record as well, too!

SLEEPY LaBEEF: Roll Over Beethoven (Charly). Very big rockabilly person with a voice that sound's like it's coming out of a swamp and a band that sounds like it oughtta go back there. The young Elvis Presley was nowhere to be seen when it was being recorded.

MERGER: Biko (Emergency). Haile fellows well meant.

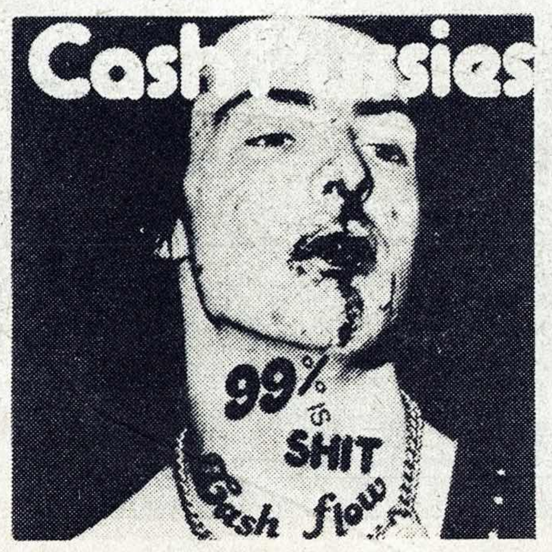
THE TUBES: Prime Time (A&M). An update of the Latino bounce favoured by early Steely Dan, loaded down with synthesisers, and aimed straight at the modern disc-styled executive bedroom. Not much fun.

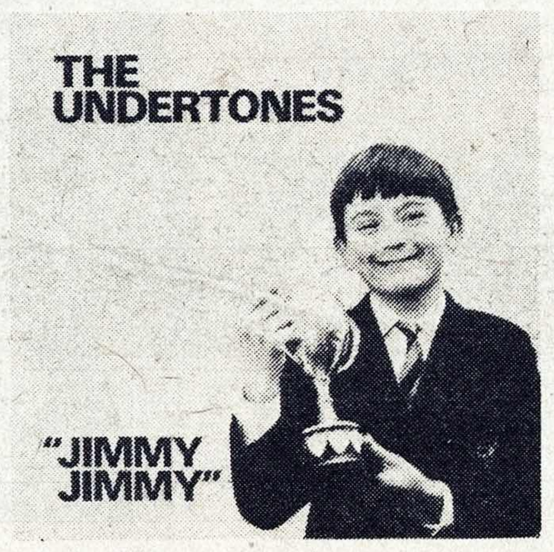
DENIZENS: Ammonia Subway (Big). Ammonia bird in a gilded cage. So what else is new? Bleak, cold, grey, etc., but this one actually works. A chilling, restrained look at tunnels full of zombies. Unfortunately, no information relating to availability was supplied, but if your local independent record shop has a copy in its bleak, cold, grey, modern section, then please don't hesitate to invest.

SARAH BRIGHTMAN AND THE STARSHIP TROOPERS: The Love Crusader (Ariola). An oh - you - great - big - wonderful - man Superman spinoff record. Sarah, we've got to stop meeting like this.

SEMA 4: 4 From Sema 4 E.P. (Sema 4). Medium wave hard rock from a New York-based trio entering the indie-sweepstakes. Best line: *"You're not one of my heroes any more."* Good performances lavished on songs that don't deserve it, but better than a lot of stuff currently being financed by Proper Record Companies who should know better. (Available from 8 Oaken Grove, Haxby, York).

Reviewed by CHARLES SHAAR MURRAY





ROCKERS TIME

YOUR REGGAE ROUND UP

THE PASSWORD this week is 'Why Not Mi-Nott?' **Sugar Minott**'s a surly-looking bastard from the photos, but his sweet voice has for a few years now been a welcome addition to the Studio One range of essential products. After serving the Brentford Road apprenticeship, Sugar has decided to make his way under independent steam, turning out new music by the cartload, and although the overall quality doesn't yet match his work with Coxsone, there are enough prime cuts to make him one of the few names to check every week.

'Never Too Young' (Warrior, 12") has Minott complaining to his girlfriend, *'You're never too young to break a heart, never too young to tear it apart'*: it brings a tear to the eye and a dip to the hip. Prince Jammy has put together a driving dub section, a few of the lads tra-la-la happily in the background, and all in all it should be one for the collection. Meanwhile, Coxsone still finds time to issue a fair amoung of Minott music, including **'Oh Mr D C'(Studio One),** which finds country boy Sugar pleading with the Old Bill to be allowed to distribute his callie amongst the needy in the Big City. Let the man pass, Mr D C. Oh yes, it's a good record too, with a dub of the sort only Coxsone Dodd provides, and that's the best (no arguments accepted).

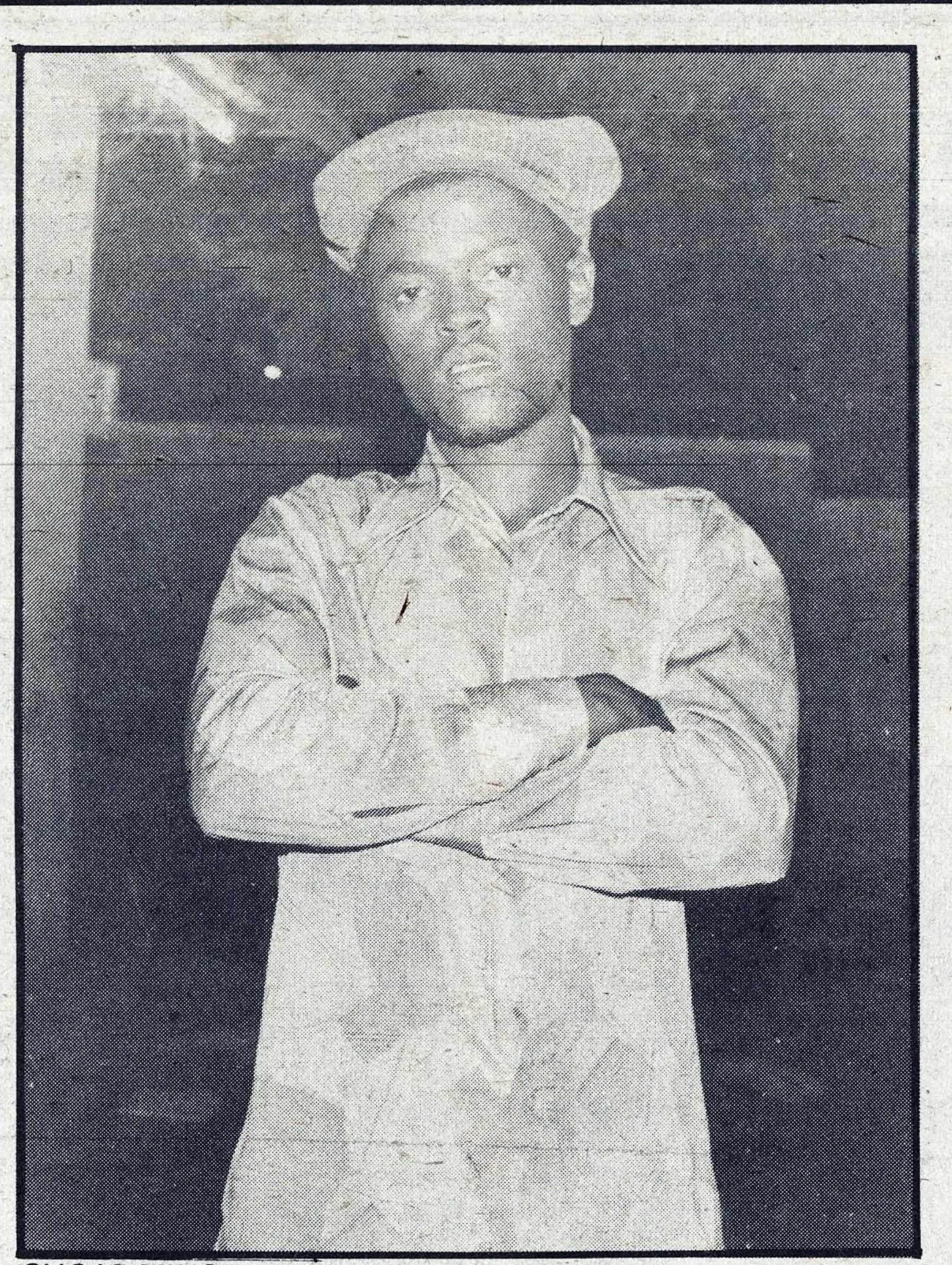
Even more checkable these days is **Freddie McKay** another ex-studio one novice. He proudly displays a bit of the old nostalgie de la boue on **'Peace Was In The Garden' (Gorgon),** produced by Sly and Robbie. Ansel Collins' unmistakeable organ and Freddie's strangled cry *'Waaaooh Beautiful Garden In Mt Zion'* lead us into a picture of innocence and serenity spoilt only by the intruding serpent. I think it's an allegory. Tougher yet is **'Tear Drops' (Channel 7),** which Freddie produced himself: similar in mood to his great 'When You're Smiling', it's the best record displayed here, but I'm cheesed off to report that it'd sold out by the time I'd got to the cash desk so I wasn't able to take it home and dissect it minutely for you. By the time you read this, copies will be swarming all over the place, and you shouldn't hesitate to elbow your way into a good buying position.

Junior Murvin is in good voice for **'Cool Out Son' (Heavy Duty),** a collection of useful adages like *'Son, Don't Put Your Hat Where You Can't Reach It'*. A thoughtful man, this Murvin. His piercing falsetto shows that he means to be taken seriously, and the strong rhythm is Joe Gibbs' revised version of The Melodians' 'Come On Little Girl', made that much better by a lovely, raucous trombone solo. Incidentally, the 'heavy duty' name applies to the label pic of a girl juggling an awesome pair of tits: You could go blind following them round the turntable, so be warned.

From a couple of months ago, **Gregory Isaacs' 'Soon Forward' (Taxi)** is his best record for ages, and is still selling well. It may not be quite as good, but try his **'Mr Brown' (Cash And Carry),** not another song about the famous duppy (of the Wailers, The Inn-Keepers, etc), but a sort of dread version of Tom Courtenay's 'Mrs Brown You've Got A Lovely Daughter'. Isaacs' feelings are as bruised as ever as he moans *'Mr Brown, I've come to check your daughter'*: for some reason her old man doesn't take too kindly to the idea, so Gregory warns him *'Please don't treat me so unkind, cos if you do I'll explode your daughter's mind'*. Not a man to mince words, our Greg. All very pleasant, and again trombones have a part to play, but will Gregory ever make a record where he sounds happy? Unlikely.

Rod Taylor's 'Every Little Thing' (Ossie Sounds) has the drummer apparently doing piece work : he plays twice as fast as necessary, and in these post-one-drop-drumming days, that only spoils an otherwise decent record. the bass is double-weight, and the dub's fair too. Rod hasn't yet made any classic tunes, but he's made a number of good records, including last year's 'His Imperial Majesty', cut for **Mikey Dread,** who uses the rhythm again on **'Black History'** by **Hopeton Lindo (Dread At The Controls).** The title tells you all you need to know about the song (nothing), but Hopeton turns in a good show, and the rhythm is typical Mikey Dread: he's the man with his pulse on everyone's finger at the moment, and he's due in London at any time. His JA radio shows would drive you up the wall if you had to listen to them all the time, but it'd be excellent if someone got him to do a show while he was here. Meanwhile, look particularly for his outrageous versions like **'Parrot Jungle'**, **'African Anthem'** and on Hopeton's tune, **'Recollection Rock'**.

Biggest surprise of the week comes from **Sly Dunbar: 'Dirty Harry' (Virgin, 12")** is a new cut to a Tommy McCook tune first heard on Glen Brown's Pantomine label, where it was also toasted, as 'Mr Harry Skank', by the youthful Pince Jazzbo. A respectable genealogy, and the new cut closely follows the original; if the sax doesn't sound quite as menacing here, it's still all right, comparing quite well with Sly's 'A Who Say', one of last year's most engaging pieces of reggae fun. As far as I know, this is the first time a Glen Brown production has ever been used as source material, so perhaps that extravagant man has now been canonized: good work, Sly. 'Dirty Harry' is actually the B-side of **'Rasta Fiesta'** (siesta more like, a pretty dozy but inoffensive instrumental.



SUGAR MINOTT: tough'n'tender
Pic: Dave Hendley

Dipping A Hip: NICK KIMBERLEY

REGGAEMATIC CHARTS

Pre.Release Singles

1 **Mr D C** — Sugar Minott (Studio One)
2 **Away With You Fussing And Fighting** — Jnr Delgado / Hugh Mundell / Augustus Pablo (Rockers, 12")
3 **Every Little Thing** — Rod Taylor (Ossie Sounds)
4 **Anti-Apartheid / Solidarity** — Peter Tosh / Bunny Wailer (Solomonic)
5 **Mr Money Man** — Danny Hensworth (Upsetter)
6 **Tear Drops** — Freddie McKay (Channel 7)
7 **Mark Of The Beast** — Freddie McGregor (Soul Syndicate)
8 **Mr Brown** — Gregory Isaacs (Cash & Carry)
9 **Cool Out Son** — Jnr Murvin (Heavy Duty)
10 **Peace Was In The Garden** — Freddie McKay (Gorgon)
11 **Black History** — Hopeton Lindo (Dread At The Controls)
12 **Dread A No Warrior** — Dillinger (Gorgon)
13 **Keep A Knocking** — Jacob Miller (Joe Gibbs, 12")
14 **Rasta Business** — Mighty Threes (April US)
15 **Rub A Dub Style** — Ranking Michigan & General Smilie (Studio One)

Chart supplied by Dub Vendor (Mail order) 18 St Johns Avenue, London SW15. Record stall, (Sats 9-5.30) Clapham Junction Market.

Going round with The Records (clockwise, natcho — from top): Phil Brown, Hugh Gower, Will Birch, John Wicks. Pix: Fin Costello.

You can't stick labels on The Records . . .

. . . and MAX BELL isn't even going to try. Instead he joins them in their search for the lost pop power chord.

THE RECORDS. Four men with a mission. Will Birch, John Wicks, Huw Gower, Phil Brown — four men who have fearlessly accepted a glorious task. In the first year of an immaculate conception this fab foursome locked itself away in a cupboard and assiduously re-wrote the book of pop. The results are definitely judged as wonderful.

Although The Records are for *now* they do emulate the standards of heroes; herein we must number The Move, Kinks, Searchers, Badfinger, McCartney and t'Buzzcocks (you get the picture) from England, while in the American corner are the Byrds, Twilley, Big Star, BOC, Trick and Shoes.

So how come you haven't got a foggy notion about this bunch? Because The Records made a deliberate decision to eschew premature public pronouncements. This is called doing yourself a favour.

Involved in the theory of the band from the outset we find Will Birch (the ex-Kursaal Flyer), a drummer and lyricist of repute, meshing pens with John Wicks, vocalist/guitarist and short term Flyer in the fag-end period before the band got squashed into the great rock'n'roll ashtray.

It was Phil McNeill, a week or four back, who wrote what I take to be the first carefully evaluated insight into The Records — though other writers have mentioned the band in passing for their part on the Stiff tour of England and America, when, although they were backing Rachel Sweet, The Records made it abundantly clear that they were the best band on the entire shebang, no question.

The review in question uncovered all the potential strengths and weaknesses in the group's set (up) but was misleading in one instance: it dropped the dreaded plosive pronged power pop tag back on Birch and co. The ramifications of even *thinking* about this horrible term are so all-enveloping that anyone found using it again is guaranteed of meeting a grisly end.

The *real* gist of Mr McNeill's piece was that The Records are a band without an audience, embarking on a course for which there have been few guidelines this past nine years. The style of music which Birch and Wicks compose and the band play has failed to manifest itself as a contemporary trend.

The sophistication of the band's execution is almost at odds with the simplicity of the design. The Records name alone suggests . . . what? An affinity, a liking for vinyl, an almost forced naivety. There is nothing remotely weird in The Records' stance, no polemic, no name dropping, no one who can't play his instrument.

Haven't got a hope in hell, have they?

The Records are mysterious, in the sense that good pop music conjures up images which can't be explained, emotions which can't be controlled and urges that can't be contained. And you haven't heard the ingredients this lot use in English pop for a loooong time.

To The Records — a baby. A metal flake rocker that pops in your mouth. Let's introduce a note of romance around here.

THE RECORDS toyed with the idea of calling themselves The Haircuts for a while but Birch knew nobody would see the joke.

One thing this band could never do is cash-in on a trend. The members exude a well-worn professionalism that defies any hint of plagiarism — they're pickled in Will Birch's definition of the daily fix and do not pretend to fit the groove of street credibility, new wave blah blah. (Radical chic in 1979 — I suffered for my art, now it's your turn.)

Birch: "I admire the energy, I like a lot of punk groups, but I can't claim to share the influences or to have contributed anything to that movement."

In the fourteen months the boys have worked it out they've released one chunk of plastic, 'Starry Eyes', a single that by virtue of its excellence was destined to create nil impact on the public sector. It was a highspot in a year of breathtaking competition.

Subsequently, the group have not been courted by the press and the fact that they could headline the recent prestigious Music Machine date without doing the obligatory encore not only suggests that they are credible artists but also, they don't have much of a following.

Me, Birch and Gower are sitting in a posh Indian joint chewing the fat on The Records' status and aims, in between mouthfuls of murghe magashe courtesy of Virgin, their benefactors. Virgin it should be stressed, have played their hand in the group's slow haul with remarkable tact, preferring not to hurry a hot property onto a false pedestal.

The week before I'd taken in my six or seventh Records gig at Portsmouth Poly. This was a warm-up to keep the fingers supple in between hard days' nights recording the debut album with Mutt Lange.

The band have tightened an unbreakable seal since last summer. The unit stands and delivers with a catalogue of numbers both commercially shattering and dangerously strident. The Birch and Wicks team has launched its ballistic after a heavy period of form study.

Birch lays down his weary fork, chomps a tangy chicken piece, pours a glass of wine and mulls a few questions with characteristic honesty and a mischievous grin spreading into wreaths across a deadpan face.

Birch, the Flyer, was about the first 'rock star' I encountered. In five years of seeing the bloke in various roles as drummer, manager, social acquaintance, I've always been struck by his ability to ride the bad times, roll with the punches. Will Birch has not been changed by this ridiculous business — a nicer guy in rock and roll you will not meet.

But enough of that, here's the rub. The Kursaal Flyers were a fine bunch of lunatics, often exciting, generally amusing. Trouble was they lacked a killer spark, they weren't going nowhere.

Birch appeared to lose confidence over that three-year period. His writing talents were not appreciated, and he seemed to be floundering in the gulf the band trod between normality and vaudeville.

The Kursaal Flyers' appeal was too diverse: too many jokes and not enough purpose. The Records hit a more direct route to your senses.

One accusation levelled against them is an absence of visual focus, no one person grabbing the spotlight. (Ironically, until recently Phil Brown was wont to deter prospective fans by posing something rotten, until Will took him off to a quiet spot.) Well, if The Records are faceless so are Buzzcocks. Course they ain't.

What it is, see, is a democracy where the whole is greater than the parts and all the parts are gleaming.

"WE POSITIVELY don't want to get built up without impressing," says Will. "Through the music, not attitude. There are loads of unknown groups getting publicity which they can't possibly justify outside of an artistic stance, an obscurity. It's being run on formulas and they all come back to Bowie — where he leads the others follow . . . three years later.

■ *Continues page 52*

I LOVE IT WHEN

WHY DOES SUCH A MAN LIVE?

THE JOURNALIST sits nervously on a large sofa in the foyer of the Berlin Park Hotel. Behind the reception desk, two industrious Germans occasionally glance disapprovingly at J's incongruous punky presence in the plush hotel. Behind J, outside the hotel in a brushed clean cobbled avenue, rests a giant Continental coach. Ninety minutes ago this coach carried five musicians and a handful of relevant assistants to the Berlin Eisseporthalle for a soundcheck, and has returned to collect rock star Lou Reed and his lady so that the soundcheck can be completed.

Eric Kronfield, Reed's manager, a short and overcompensative American in his mid-30s, has gone to Reed's room to awaken him from a nap. J sits apprehensively waiting to be introduced to Reed, who does not like journalists. In fact, he actively hates them — believes they are the lowest of the low. As for *New Musical Express,* Reed has, for some years now, refused to speak to the paper — even, at one American concert, going so far as to threaten not to perform if an *NME* man was even in the building.

J's presence here is only the result of a strange screening ceremony he went through a few weeks before the Germany trip. Arista, Reed's worried record company, had suggested the idea of a 'reconciliation' to Kronfield, who requested a meeting with The Chosen Journalist before attempting to persuade Reed that an interview would be harmless and maybe even productive.

Kronfield analysed J at Claridges, the London hotel, and the scene wasn't so much humiliating as agreeably absurd. Nevertheless J left Kronfield's room with little hope that Reed would agree to the meeting, Kronfield having emphasised that Reed's distaste for journalists had never been so intense.

Yet, a few days later Kronfield telephoned J from New York to say the interview was 'on'.

No reason was given for Reed's submission.

NOW J SITS impatiently on the sofa, picking away the skin from around his nails, and three darkly clothed people drift into view — Kronfield, Reed and his lady.

J is introduced; everything assumes an importance. Reed is looking good, the flabbiness of a few years ago replaced with firm and obviously exercised muscles. His face is hard but relaxed, like a devilish Noddy, dominated by slightly protruding eyes that are continually glazed and cryptic. He functionally shakes J's hand, his eyes disinterested yet probing, focussing on J's face then pulling away as sudden and as dismissive as his hand. J twitches a little, though he didn't want to.

There is an almost imperceptible shake in Reed's fingers — something J does not notice until the end of the weekend — and his abundant, raucous and totally unexpected laughter, like a monkey being tickled — totally contradicts the moody, gloomy face he likes to show to strangers.

During the weekend J notices and experiences remnants of the controlled and uncontrolled Lou Reed legend, but mostly sees the real Lou Reed break through the intentionally mis-guiding public image, those make believe screens of insult and insolence Reed erects to hide behind, those contrived and exaggerated screens of self abuse and deception. J noticed an intensely ambitious man getting on with the job, and a crafty little imp still fond of playing games. The imp is on reigns.

Lou Reed is a soft, selfish poet, committed to his art, his craft. Lou Reed wants to love himself. Lou Reed is his own biggest critic, and at the moment he's giving himself good reviews. It almost seems, sometimes, as though people are irrelevant to Lou Reed . . . or at least viewed as inferior. But then sometimes they seem to be crucial.

As the four climb onto the coach, Reed freezes J, zips his expensive anorak up to fight the cold, totally oblivious to J's presence. J doesn't exist. The coach smoothly takes off for the Eisseporthalle, Reed and Kronfield talk about this, about that, about nothing, and J might as well not be there. J feels as if he's part of a game.

He snatches a look at the real Lou Reed, giggling with Kronfield about nightclub whores, and thinks of 'Pale Blue Eyes'.

DO YOU ever feel people regard you as a hero? The name 'Lou Reed' and the things it supposedly stands for?

Yeah.

Is that a kind of pressure?

Is that a kind of pressure? Yes. You're getting a very straightforward interview so relish it.

That pressure affects you?

Yes.

You've mentioned the pressures of being the other side of the Berlin Wall . . .

I can only try and imagine that . . .

Sure, but as Lou Reed you've pressures other people can only try and imagine . . .

Everybody has pressures. And everybody has pressure that other people can only imagine. You have pressures that I can't imagine. Well, I can try and imagine them. It's just a matter of degrees I would suspect. There are some pressures which you can probably imagine . . . my biggest pressure is to live up to my own expectations.

Your own?

Mine, not anybody else's.

Not your reputation.

Oh no. Oh no. I mean, *that* I have to live down to. People think that way and other people have another version. Their expectations may be somewhat along the lines of my own. I don't know if my expectations are that high, it's just that they're very hard. Harder than I give it credit for.

Expectations to do what?

TO BE THE GREATEST WRITER . . . THAT EVER LIVED . . . ON GOD'S EARTH . . . in other words I'm talking about Shakespeare . . . Dostoyevsky . . .

What kind of writer?

A writer . . . I want to do a rock'n'roll thing that's on the level of *The Brothers Karamazov* . . . starting to build up a body of work, y'know, I could come off sounding very pretentious about this, which is why I usually don't say anything . . . I prefer not to . . .

A HISTORICAL SURVEY

SINCE LOU Reed left The Velvet Underground, who made some of the classic, most influential music of the rock'n'roll genre, he has spent a lot of his time fiddling about. His initial solo work mocked and knocked his Velvet's song, where he'd established himself as the lone rock'n'roll contemporary of American novelists such as Mailer, Capote and Bellow — no small achievement.

With his first two solo records, which were blatant attempts to get some attention, he gave the sense of being a perverse boy liking to annoy his listeners by being sick and crippled. 'Lou Reed' and 'Transformer' had false vitality, total inner incoherence and sham shock value.

'Berlin' was Lou Reed's first proper continuation of the dream — but not surreal — worlds he'd traced and investigated during the Velvets days. It is one of rock's major works; moving, darkly gothic, vivid, substantially experimental but not in any forced, oblique manner.

Appalled by the insensitive clumsy, fickle acceptance of the record, Reed went wildly out of his way to irritably attack and illuminate the reactionary lines of rock'n'roll.

He became derisive, silly, condescending, fulfilling his own existential project along the way, but losing 'respect' and attention. (Not that that mattered.) He made Frank Zappa look like Paul McCartney.

'Metal Machine Music' was an insult, with confusing redeeming artistic generalisations. 'Sally Can't Dance', a shallow and passive record, was an absolute insult that proved a point by selling its way into the American top ten.

The two live albums, 'Rock'n'Roll Animal' and 'Lou Reed Alive' were the ultimate insults, Reed wrecking the rare beauty and affirmation of his greatest songs by turning them into cliche ridden hack heavy metal mutations. They were received well and sold well, but the satisfaction Reed got out of them was nothing to do with their musical substance.

He leaped from RCA to Arista, caught his breath, and cast a respectable, blueish light on his character with the stylish, picaresque 'Coney Island Baby'. Since then there has been some sort of loose consistency in Reed's work, possessing more than just incidental personal value.

'Rock'n'Roll Heart' was a re-affirmation, almost an apology, whilst 'Street Hassle', a study of identity and compliance, is probably his strongest work to date. The grotesque, surgically idulgent live double 'Take No Prisoners' wags a finger — at himself, of course, more than anybody else.

The picture composed by Reed's work is disfigured, discoloured but unnervingly convoluted and involved. Reed's true solo creative core, where he attempts clear cut, composed expression instead of insulting and abusing everybody around him 'cos it makes him feel good, is in 'Berlin', 'Coney Island Baby' 'Rock'n'Roll Heart', 'Street Hassle' and by the looks of things the new LP 'The Bells'. Those, with the cynical edges, the impassioned intent behind the other fragmented, narcissistic assaults, are Lou Reed. The relationship with anybody else's world is problematical.

IN THE body of work that you've put out over the last 12 years do you think that you've come anywhere near achieving that ambition . . . to be the "greatest writer" ever?

I'm starting to think I have.

You're coming close or you have done?

I'm on the right track. I think I haven't done badly. But I think I haven't really scratched the surface. I think I'm just starting.

You have recorded a tremendous body of work . . . (Reed interprets 'tremendous' as meaning 'classic' not 'extensive'.)

Well! . . . I don't think that for a second. Every once in a while I'll hear one of those things on the radio, hear some of the old things, and I'll say, hey, you know that ain't half bad! I thought the show we did in Berlin was a culmination of all this . . . like the band I have is incredible . . . I can't operate without a band for what I want to do . . . and part of what I want to do is have something that only takes place once . . . so as a consequence you can't point to it as an indication of anything.

"I mean, what we did in Berlin, I just thought it doesn't happen every night . . . I mean you try . . . I think we can do better than that . . . But I was very happy with that one. It was guitar symphony, guitar orchestra, I mean, especially with the kind of guitars we're using. It just gets awesome. You can conduct it. I always wish . . . well, in a way I'm glad they don't take rock'n'roll seriously, but in a way I think they should.

They?

Oh! They is them, y'know, everybody thinks of a them, the them you're thinking of, the them I'm thinking of, give or take a person, like the 'Sister Ray' we did went on for a half an hour, it had one vocal on it, and it was just incredible. If we weren't rock'n'roll people some of them might say isn't that marvellous . . . but the rock'n'roll people in Berlin thought it was marvellous. It really took you. It went past rhythm . . . it went past key . . . I hate talking about it actually.

You hate talking about things that you've done or things that you do?

People make music to express certain things or they write lyrics to express a certain thing, and you can't talk about it because that was you talking . . . that was your talking. That was it. Anything else is not going to be nearly as good. Because it's constructed and crafted . . . I hate the word crafted . . . to do, to be it, and if somebody says to me well what have you to say I say — well THAT'S what I have to say! To talk to me, y'know, won't be anywhere as near as good as listening to that. I've worked on that.

THE JOURNEY THROUGH HELL, THE FIRST ORDEAL

THE COACH pulls up outside the hall. Reed eases himself out of the coach and dawdles into the hall. J follows, distant and dubious. Almost immediately Reed joins the band to complete the soundcheck — a long and relaxed rehearsal taking in 'Sweet Jane', an aborted 'You Really Got Me', 'I'll Be Your Mirror' and selections from 'Berlin'. The sound in the large, chilly temporarily converted ice rink is full and clear.

During the soundcheck J wearily asks Kronfield if he's intruding. Kronfield dutifully calms his fears but doesn't really convince him. The check drags on a lot longer than it should . . . alarmed discussions erupt between Kronfield, the promoters and the hall owners. People have began to come through the doors . . . "You tell them there'll be no show if people break in on Lou's soundcheck," lectures Kronfield, and then hurries off to curtail the soundcheck, admitting that the promoters are right and the time to let people in was ten minutes before.

Reed and his musicians amble off stage and file into the pale, brightly lit and bare changing room. The group sit around a wooden table to eat, drink, dress, tell jokes and plan the set. J sits about six feet away from the group, lonely and wary. His face reflects his misery. After 20 minutes of chomping and intimate wisecracking Reed suddenly, almost for the first time, acknowledges J's presence.

"Feeling out of it?" he cruelly drawls.

J stutters and reddens, yearning to be tough; Reed swiftly introduces him to the band, messing it up at the end when he gets his name mixed up with Stewart the drummer. Stewart needlessly corrects him.

"Aw take his name. He don't need it. He's only a journalist."

A few minutes later Reed almost reluctantly confronts J. "Hey, can I ask you something? Are you going to do a hatchet job on me?"

Is it that you object to being criticised on a personal level, furiously and thoughtlessly maybe?

"That's not bad. I also hate the way something then is compared to something then. People should understand . . . well, no people shouldn't understand . . . no, that's not right either . . . I'm one of those people who cannot only see both sides of the coin but also from the side as well. If I had any more peripheral vision I probably wouldn't be able to walk . . . It's one of those things like . . . I can see everybody's point of view, but there's a book back in New York that I happen to like — *How To Be Your Best Friend* — that says if you're not on your side and they're not on your side, who is on your side?!!? I don't see how rock'n'roll should be explained. The attraction of it has always been to . . . like it's a sonnet or a villanelle — that's French poem like a sonnet only it's 14 lines . . . I forget the rhyme scan but I studied it at university.

"Everybody had to go home and write a villanelle, and y'know, in rock'n'roll you've got your three or four minutes or something . . . but then you can really, y'know, by-pass tradition and go for an hour, half an hour. The Grateful Dead stuff is like that, but I think that's the difference between a jam and a structure. That get's into boring theoretics. It either does or it doesn't!!!

"But in fact I do have theories about these things. I'm not a Noble Savage. One, I'm not noble, and two, I'm not a savage. I'm one of those people, y'know, I went to school, my parents weren't especially poor . . . and I know what I'm doing. I didn't always but I do now.

. . . WITH A GUITAR (OF PRAYER, OF LOVE, AND OF CONTACT WITH OTHER WORLDS.)

THE CONCERT in Berlin was as vulnerable, as autonomous, as fluent and as powerful as any music can possibly be, lasting for over three hours and drifting through an enormous range of passion and highs. In its implications it was rock'n'roll truly growing up.

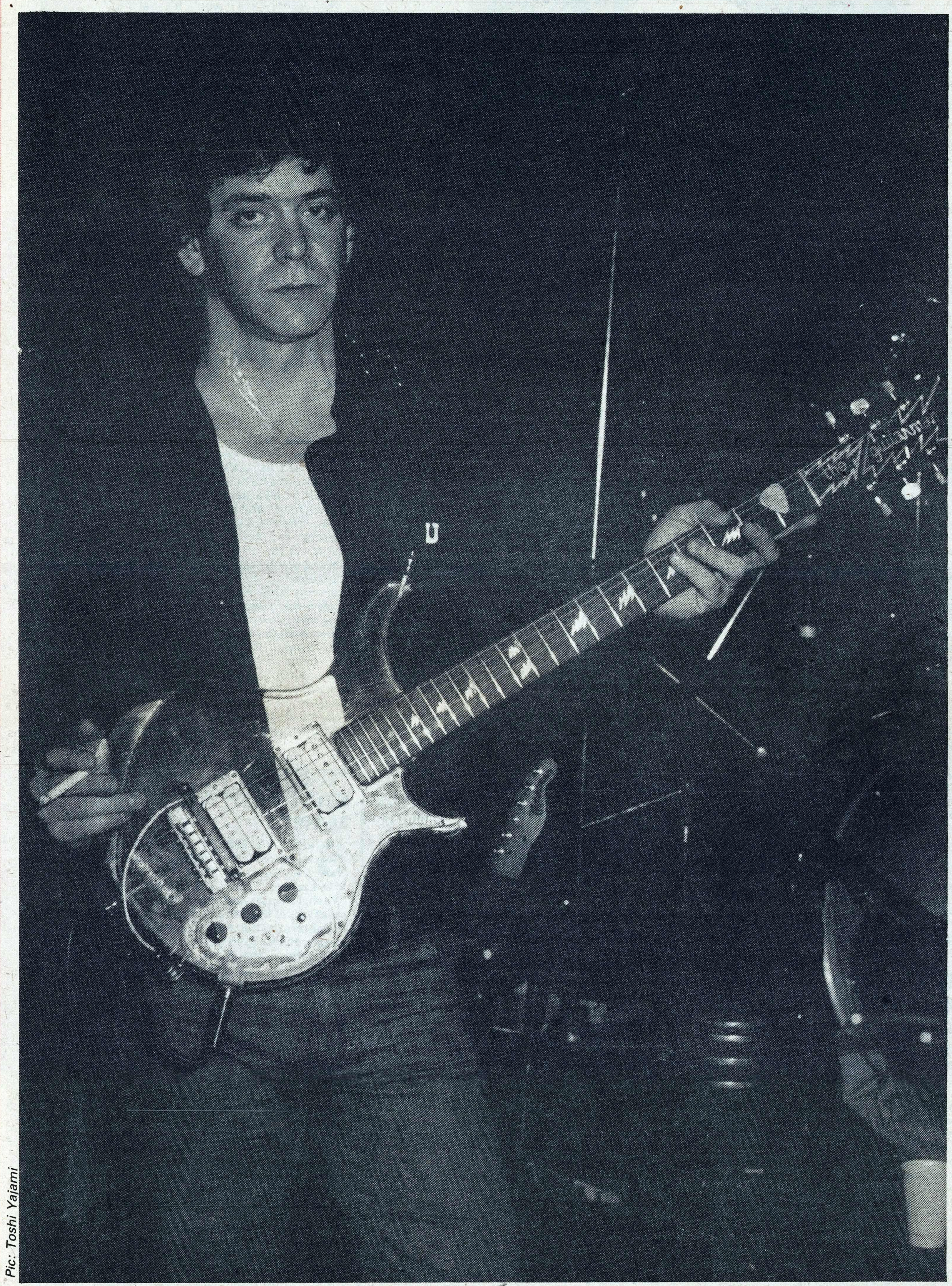
It was an exposure of awful and special things; it was one hell of a noise, meaning what? It was disciplined by neither a need to play safe nor a need to smile, but, if anything, just a need. It's easy to understand why Reed doesn't like talking about such things. It either does it or doesn't. You either feel it or you don't.

The show proved how far rock'n'roll can go without sacrificing its identity, that Lou Reed has done something Lennon, Jagger, Dylan etc have failed to do; push rock'n'roll forward, ignore the boundaries yet retain the spirit, keep creating rock'n'roll without borrowing, looking backwards and sidewards, like he was Johnny Lydon or something.

In Berlin,
LOU REED make
cr

The lanky one d
and kneels b
who would

YOU TALK DIRTY



Pic: Toshi Yajami

by the wall,
es PAUL MORLEY
awl

ons his sou'wester
efore the man
be Dostoyevsky

Lou Reed grows old and still plays rock'n'roll . . . that regenerates. There is no precedent. Everyone else gives up, goes slow or reflects. Lou Reed's rock'n'roll isn't going bald or limping, it's pulsing, flowing . . . it's a classical music. A formidable and vigorous music.

He played 'Sweet Jane', 'I'll Be Your Mirror', 'Rock And Roll' and a long, long 'Waiting For The Man' that was like a misty, mysterious landscape. The show took in most of the 'Berlin' album, something Reed was childishly delighted about. During the metaphysical movements from 'Berlin' it was a special occasion. It was alright. He encored with a random 'Walk On The Wild Side' and the intensity of 'The Bells.'

The Berliners still wanted more.

Reed leapt off stage shouting 'On!' Meaning, it turned out, that he wanted the lights left 'on off. The lighting people who received the message via the promoter's signal naturally thought it meant turn the lights on, and failed to respond to a second signal.

Reed was furious. Despite the two and a half hours that he'd performed, he passionately wanted to do more. For himself. Eventually the lights dimmed, and those who had lingered rushed stage-front for an unexpected bonus. Forty minutes of cumulative, climactic improvised rock'n'roll, culminating with a classic 'Sister Ray' — a 'Sister Ray' additionally awesome because it was obvious that as soon as Lou Reed sang a line over the foaming, forming guitar patterns that it was all going to stop and he'd walk off and it did and he did.

So what. How do you *talk* about music, particularly when . . .

B*ERLIN was a great show, you hit 4,000 people . . .*

Standing!

Sure . . . but how does this fall into your ambition?

However good you can do without an audience, with an audience it can be better. With an audience's energy there . . . Like, I thought of the audience as one big YES! I mean, they were right there from the top . . . I really don't like talking about these things. The more people going in the right direction, the higher you can go with it and the better it can be. It's just that when you have a couple of thousand plus the band who are all pushing there's gotta be something going on. Things happen that are just extraordinary . . . that you can never forget unless you don't do them for a while. It's hard to get things like that on records. Actually, it's hard to remember special occasions. Isn't that a beautiful line? It's really so true.

Have you known lots of special occasions?

If I think about it, yeah. . . . but I think that you want to extend the special occasion. Like there are moments — we all know what moments are. A special occasion is like a whole lot of moments . . . a special occasion would be one monster moment, like a week-long guitar symphony! I'd like to think why stop there? A long time ago I said like wouldn't it be amazing if you had a thousand guitars in the Grand Canyon all tuned to E . . . everybody just hits it like that . . . and a pre amp guitar equals the saxophone section, and two pre amp guitars and a guitar synthesiser all just droning in E, which happened in Berlin in fact, and a soprano sax, which sounded like a violin, that's really soothing, very relaxing . . . a guitar orchestral.

"Again, I know this sounds very pretentious, but I mean what I say that you can conduct it . . .the whole idea in rock'n'roll of swelling in music, of peaks, of valleys, of going up, of going down, dynamics seems to be ailing . . . why they don't have that is beyond me . . .

Do you listen to other rock'n'roll?

I like Roxy Music, Bryan Ferry. I like David Bowie. That's it. I like disco as well. I think Ferry and Bowie are very intelligent.

On what level are you talking? Traditional?

Well, as my friend Don Cherry would say, on a traditional level and a little bit more.

THE SECOND ORDEAL

WHEN THE show finally winds down, Reed and the group go straight to their dressing room, lock themselves in and calm down listening to a tape of the concert. J isn't allowed in for a half hour. Eventually Kronfield beckons him in.

The atmosphere is as coldly forbidding as before. J is out of place. But Reed soon acknowledges his presence. "What did the *NME* think of it then," he sneers. "You can't deny it was a great show."

J mutters incomprehensibly through a dry throat, the words of agreement beat back by a silly lump in his throat.

"Whaaat?"

J nervously leaps to a chair next to Reed.

"Thought it was great," he blurts. "I don't believe you," smiles Reed. "Why not?" J asks. "Because you're a journalist."

"Oh, of course.

Reed fixes J with a frightening stare. "You know, I hate people like you." J repeats that he thought the show was great. "I know it was great. I don't need you to tell me *that.*"

Kronfield inadvertently rescues J.

Reed, his lady, the group, the promoters, and J are supposedly going out for a night on the Berlin town, something that theoretically cannot be missed. Kronfield herds everyone onto the coach, and the coach pulls away, making for the hotel so that people can freshen up before exploring the seamy decadence of Berlin.

Half way to the hotel, Reed, seated a few rows behind the hapless J, starts shouting. "There's a journalist on the bus," he whines. "A journalist!" Kronfield attempts to ease his feelings. "Fuck nice journalists!" retorts Reed. "Show me a journalist that isn't a whore and I'll show you a man."

Lou Reed then collapses from exhaustion . . or something.

Y*OU object to people like me who interrupt your natural flow?*

Well, look at your predecessors. I'm going on track record. Y'know, the old corny

■ *Continues next page*

LOOPY LOU

■ *From previous page*

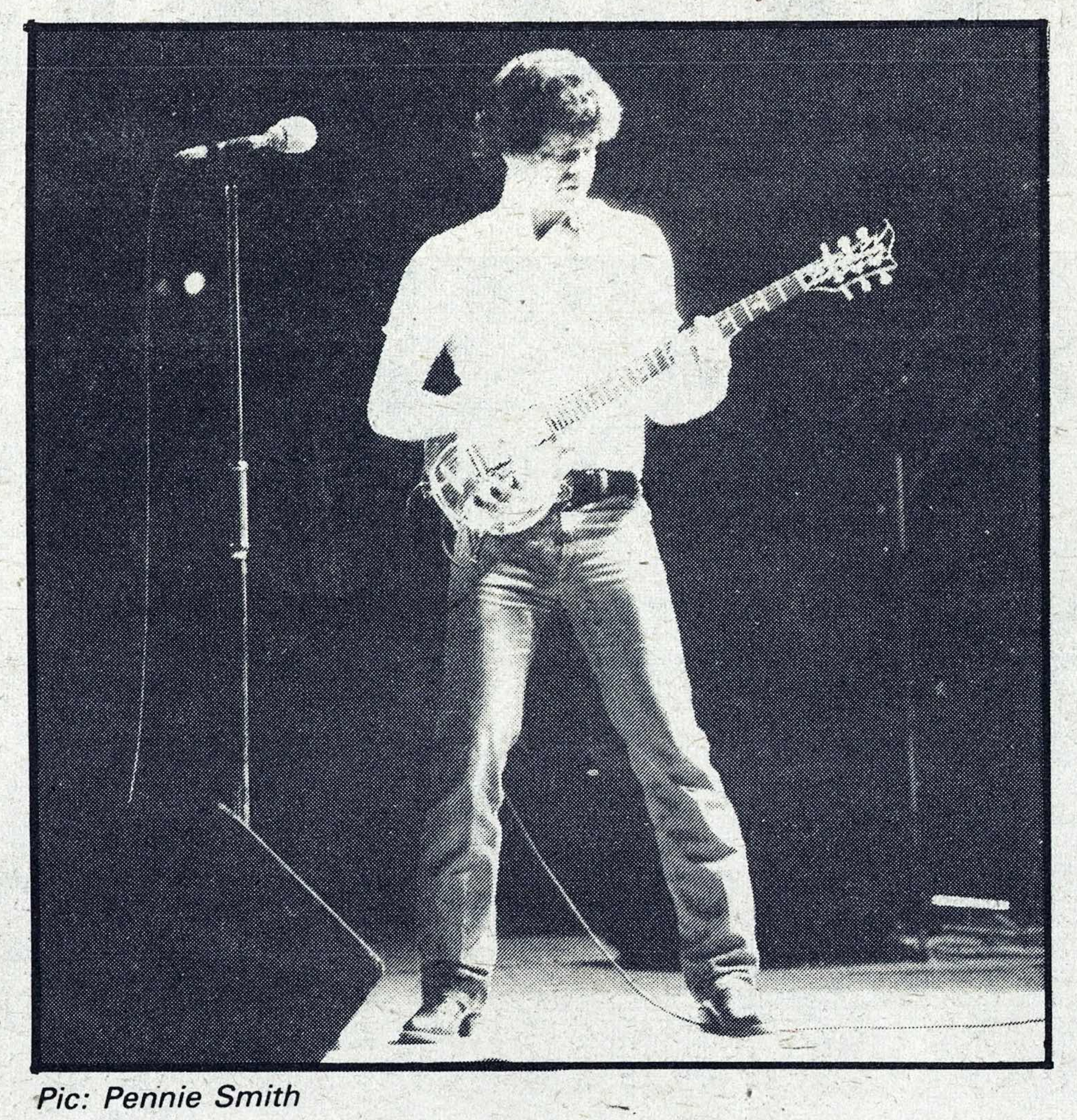
line: the audience is like the member of the band, and the journalist is the roadie. It's just that my experience of journalists has always been negative.

You think criticism is fairly irrelevant?

Well, it doesn't have anything to do with anything. It, um, gives people things to talk about . . . I like playing in a band, I like making records, but I hate talking about them. I mean, I've mastered the really funny, insulting interview and all that, so that we don't go near anything of great concern to anybody since that's not what they're interested in anyway.

A lot of your interviews are simple one-sided comic repartee . . .

(Snigger) What else? How else can one deal with the absurd! The questions I've been asked, and the people who've asked them, have always struck me as comic. It's like I've always thought of it as something straight out of a very bad soap opera on TV. It's like kids imitating journalists. I mean, Hemingway was a journalist, Dorothy Parker was a critic. Delmore Schwartz was a critic . . .



Pic: Pennie Smith

THE OLD CLOWN

THE NEXT MORNING Lou Reed is back to being the cool, controlled customer J first met; unaffected and unimpressed by his presence. But at breakfast in the Park Hotel, Reed does almost talk to J —" . . . What is the morning like without Coca-cola," he rhetorically sighs, half to no one, half to J, and J senses that maybe the previous day's cold neutrality and eventual resentment was the Reed legend consciously surfacing — to put J in his place, not to make things uninterestingly acessible. A sort of test. But J isn't so sure. One of the hardest things he's ever known is to be sure about Lou Reed.

Reed has been wanting to see the Berlin Wall. (J is slightly puzzled that Reed has never seen it before.) The coach that is taking the entourage to Berlin airport for a flight to Dusseldorf (for Sunday night's concert — Saturday, this day, is a free day) will take a detour so that Reed can view the Wall. No real reason to be at the wall?

Out at the wall, which has the atmosphere of a quiet surban park just prior to a mass rape, the entourage, especially Reed, enthuse and wow. The coach is allowed to move slowly down a Russian-occupied drive-way, ominously guarded by REAL, SERIOUS soldiers, up close to some neat barbed wire which is roughly 50 yards from a low, white section of the Wall.

Pictures are taken.

It's eery, too real. J feels cheap, intrigue and fascination hardly being the point. Everyone on the coach stares into East Berlin, expecting to see what? Faces gawping back? And snatches of song drift through J's mind . . . a cheap holiday in other people's misery . . . I wanna go over the Berlin Wall . . . shot by both sides . . . and something J had often hummed during the weekend . . . and I would rather be anywhere else than here today.

The coach softly accelerates from the wall on its way to the comfy airport.

"What a heavy, heavy trip," breathes Reed "Wow."

Checkpoint Charlie (was it really?) is left far behind and conversation bubbles in some sort of pride and relief at the 'freedom' of the west. As we near the airport conversation has dropped into areas of honest frivolity. Reed recalls walking through a district of New York, and seeing what he thought was a heavy mob fight.

"So naturally I went over to join in. And it turned out to be Muhammed Ali out for a walk. Y'know, he'd come out to see his people. It was amazing. They were all screaming 'Ali! you are the greatest' and I just got carried away, seeing him there. And I joined in . . . 'Yes, Ali, YOU ARE The Greatest!'

The entourage piles onto the 'plane, royally jumping the queue ahead of 'normal' passengers. Reed is buffered from flight formalities by Kronfield and the tour promoter, drifting through like he hasn't a care in the world. He signs an autograph for a pitifully humble German, the father of an even more shy young fan, who backs away, blushing and bowing. He trips over himself. It's sickening.

A 50-minute flight and we're in Dusseldorf, strolling through the airport building.

Kronfield remarks to J: "Hey, you must be really tired, you haven't said a word all day!"

Reed: "Journalists never say anything, they just listen." But there's humour in his face, and he emphasises the last word with a relish J finds quite encouraging. Then there's another ride to another expensive Park hotel.

WHERE I'VE been fortunate . . . why I've stuck with it is so I can make rock'n'roll records. Because I make the records for myself. The only criteria I have for a record is that I like it.

Do you feel privileged to be able to do that — spend lots of money making an album, stay in the best hotels?

I think I deserve it. That and a whole lot more! I don't feel privileged, I feel lucky. I think I deserve the privilege, and it's a privilege to hear the record. I feel lucky to be able to make it. Catch the difference . I know I'm no slouch.

It's just that I want to make the best thing for everyone. But the only criteria I have for that is that I like it. You can't figure out what other people like. How could you? Well, there are people who make disco records who put together what they think other people will like. I do the reverse. I'm totally on the other side of the coin. My standard is always, am I happy with it? And if it goes out there and everybody hates it I go through all sorts of changes, but at least I liked it.

Are you particularly assaulting, disturbing, confronting your audience, or your assumed audience?

I don't want my audience to do anything. I don't care what my audience does. That's up to them. They can do whatever they want. I'm just happy I make rock'n'roll records.

How do I'know what they think, feel or want to do? I just keep track of myself. I'm sure other people just want to keep track of themselves. And I make records the best that I know how for me, using myself as a judge. I mean, how can I use somebody else as a judge — they have their own thing that they do . . .

But you must have certain moralistic intentions, or responsibility?

I only relate it to myself. No, thoughts pass through my head, but I would never put out a manifesto. My manifesto is just the record — but I don't think of it as a manifesto. It's just a rock'n'roll record, take it or leave it.

I just wanna make really nice records and get to play with the band, our music, our way, and when I can't make records our way I won't make them and if I can't play my way then I won't play, because why would anybody want to play anybody else's way?

THE MEDICAL EVIDENCE AND A POUND OF NUTS

(A Day In Dusseldorf With A Lover Of Life!)

THEJOURNALIST strolls to the reception area of the Dusseldorf Park Hotel to meet up with the Reed entourage who are going to eat. Surprisingly, Reed is there, sat alone in an armchair. J grasps his opportunity. He tells Reed how much he enjoyed the previous night's show.

"If you hadn't have said what a great show it was I was going to have you deported," reveals Reed, not kidding.

But, protests J, "I told you after the show I thought it was great but you didn't believe me."

"Yeah, but I've had experience of people saying something like that and then turning round and saying something else."

Whatever, he begins to talk.

Back on the coach, Reed and Kronfield are puzzling over a mysterious telegram Chuck the guitarist has received from Turin, trying to determine the sex of the sender.

"I say," concludes Reed, "if you can't tell the difference what difference does it make!"

He's in a good mood. He has forgotten there's a journalist on the coach, or maybe isn't that bothered. It often seems Reed can't make up his own mind about his journalist paranoia.

The coach passes a McDonalds. Anyone want a Big Mac?

"A Big Mac," whistles Reed. "That would be great. No . . . you can always get a Big Mac. The last time I was in Paris I was at this posh hotel and I had them deliver eight Big Macs and 12 chocolate shakes, and the guy that was delivering them tripped! All these plush carpets and shit, filled with Big Macs and chocolate shakes! And they were all going mon dieu mon dieu.

"I said mon dieu your ass! I couldn't believe it. It was so funny. I mean, you'd step on the carpet and Big Macs came out at you. It was really disgusting! Do you know, I read an article on junk food, where this nutritionist from Harvard said that it was healthier to eat a Big Mac than to go to a fancy French restaurant, because McDonalds had spent a lot of money researching how to put minimum requirements of vitamins into their hamburgers. I mean, can you believe it? Hey, they hired this guy for 200 dollars to make the endorsement. Professor of the Big Mac college of nutrition! French fries are coated with Vitamin D!"

Lou Reed likes his food. After scorning a restaurant chosen by the coach driver he goes to a small Italian pizza restaurant further up the road along with his lady, J, Tony the sax player, Moose the bass player and Chuck.

Inside, he rants: "The coach driver recommended that place! I mean, you don't ask the coach driver to recommend what book to read. You don't ask the coach driver what record to listen to. So why ask him where to eat?"

When Reed gets his pizza — a huge, deep specimen — he looks at it in awe for fully 60 seconds; ladles garlic all over it.

"I . . . am . . . going . . . to . . . enjoy . . . this pizza . . ." he drools. Finally, he takes a bite. "Oh my Godddddd!" he exclaims. "That is amazing!" His eyes shut in ecstasy. "That is probably the best pizza I have ever tasted. I know that's an extreme thing to say."

J decides this episode says more about Lou Reed than anything he can think of.

Later on, in a bar just around the corner, J, with solid confidence, asks Reed if he can talk to him sometime during the day. "You mean talk talk," Reed frowns. Mmmm. "I don't think so.

"It's a day off y'know?"

Reed is almost humble.

"How about tomorrow?" The Interview is arranged for 1.00 pm the next day. J had cracked it.

DO YOU feel you have the experience or whatever to achieve your ambition?

I couldn't answer that. I think it's very very pretentious of me to even think of it.

On the *other* hand, I think I have it in my pocket, that there's no end to how incredible it can be. Just amazing in a contemporary sense . . . just amazing. But I keep things like that to myself. So . . . so! I'll give you a good line. I'm very good on things like that, it might not necessarily be true. To keep from being shot down you have to fly higher than people can shoot, y'know.

. . . why do you work within rock'n'roll?

Aah . . . because I'm one of those kamikaze pilots and I like to shoot down once in a while. I like to start out where everybody else is and take them with us. And that's what we did that whole show in Berlin, y'know. If you read any English text book it'll say that when someone says Y'know it means they don't.

This ambition has been everything since the beginning?

Oh yeah.

Any points where you've got close.

Not at all. I've given indications that it is possible.

Whereabouts?

Right from the beginning.

Any specific areas?

You've got to take the whole thing.

Do you still listen to the old things?

I can't get copies. I listen to the latest things. I always think the latest things are the best.

What about the latest things, then?

Oh, well, we'll mention the new album 'The Bells'. You saw 'The Bells' — you HEARD 'The Bells'. I picture things you hear actually. I'm sure there are people who look at pictures and hear music, but I hear music and see pictures. And anyway, we performed 'The Bells'. And that's the best yet.

From you?

Yes.

Can you see yourself achieving this ambition within rock'n'roll, or do you think you'll have to go outside? Or don't you think it matters as long as you do it for yourself?

I have, in my darker hours, thought that the form couldn't hold the content. I think that the thing we're working with shows that it can. It's just that it goes unrecognised by everybody.

Do you feel confident that it will be recognised?

No. I rather think it won't. It's just that *I* know.

That's the justification?

It's the only thing that matters. Everyone else can say it's wonderful, but what's it matter if it's a piece of shit as far as I'm concerned. I'm not kidding anybody unless I'm kidding myself. I've had things out that I've thought were trash, and people said they were great . . . and you're going to say oh what and I'm not going to say!

The thing is, I've always tried to do my best to my standards. Every year we put out one or two records and I always have a great pride that what was ever going down things were always on time. I'm one of those people who needs a deadline. I like the deadline aspect of it all. I mean, I transpose 12 or 14 lines of poetry within 4-6 months, to come up with whatever . . . and then it comes out and you've got, say, 20 minutes a side. It's like a good pinball game. It's not just luck.

ANOTHER RUINED REPUTATION

FIVE YEARS ago, at a time when Lou Reed was playing silly games, the *NME Encyclopaedia Of Rock* broadcast that — "unless Reed can firmly establish independence of early career without driving away original audience, Reed will not last."

Lou Reed, as rock'n'roll hero, will last for ever because he has intense faith in himself as a writer, as an artist, and believes passionately in 'rock'n'roll' and his ambition. Because he hardly relies on the attention of an audience, but regards it almost as a convenience, a bonus. He could easily continue creating without an obvious audience, and in some ways would probably prefer to, and in a lot of ways has done over the last few years.

We have to applaud Lou Reed for the exquisite power and beauty of his best songs; but we are also entitled to ask how much, in fact, he cares about anything but the quality of each of his particular performances. The immorality of his work is alarming, but he never tries to hide it. He is Dostoyevsky's beetle-man: "To hell with your System. I demand the right to behave as I like. I demand the right to regard myself as *utterly unique.*"

"IT'S NICE TO HAVE A CHAT WITH A CLEVER MAN"

SUNDAY MORNING, 12 o'clock. J telephones Reed in his room. "Hello. It's The Journalist," "Oh." "Is it still alright to talk to you? "Yeah. I said one. It's 12." "Yeah, I'm just checking." "Mmmmm" "Ah, meet you in the bar with the posh seats?"

J enters the bar early. Lou and his lady are already there. Reed taps his watch. "It's 12.54. Half an hour, okay?"

How do you get on with the business side of it all?

I don't. I've been through a lot. Musicians are really at the bottom of the ladder, probably along with writers. They're the people who get stiffed the first and paid the last. I don't relate to business. I don't think I ever will. I've never really gone into it in any way. I tried at some point, but I just couldn't.

My experience with business have been worse than those with journalists, and I have the law suits to prove it. It's . . . it's . . . unspeakable. I mean, people like to go out and play and that should be enough without also having to deal with business. And know what's going on all the time.

So why have you survived through managerial abuse and courtroom insult?

I've been very lucky. I'm also very good. I'm also very stubborn.

There's been lots of bad points?

Aaaaah! Sure!

What keeps you going?

I really like making rock'n'roll records. I love playing in a band. Why else does anybody do anything?

No one will ever see a show like you saw in Berlin . . . I've never seen one like that. And it's different every night because there's no way you can do a thing like that twice. I will be very depressed . . . well I won't be depressed, because I'll expect it . . . if you do a hatchet job after the show you saw.

The 'Sister Ray' that was on the album was never duplicated because no one wrote it down. You can't teach it to people. You say to someone it's in E. It's just at this stage of the game I don't need to be maligned by anyone. That's why we'll keep it to a half hour . . . not that I needed to be maligned before, it's just that I didn't realise it.

AFTER THE interview was over, Lou Reed shook J's hand, wished him a good flight and smartly left the bar. J wanted to ask Reed if he believed in God, but he decided he knew what the answer would have been.

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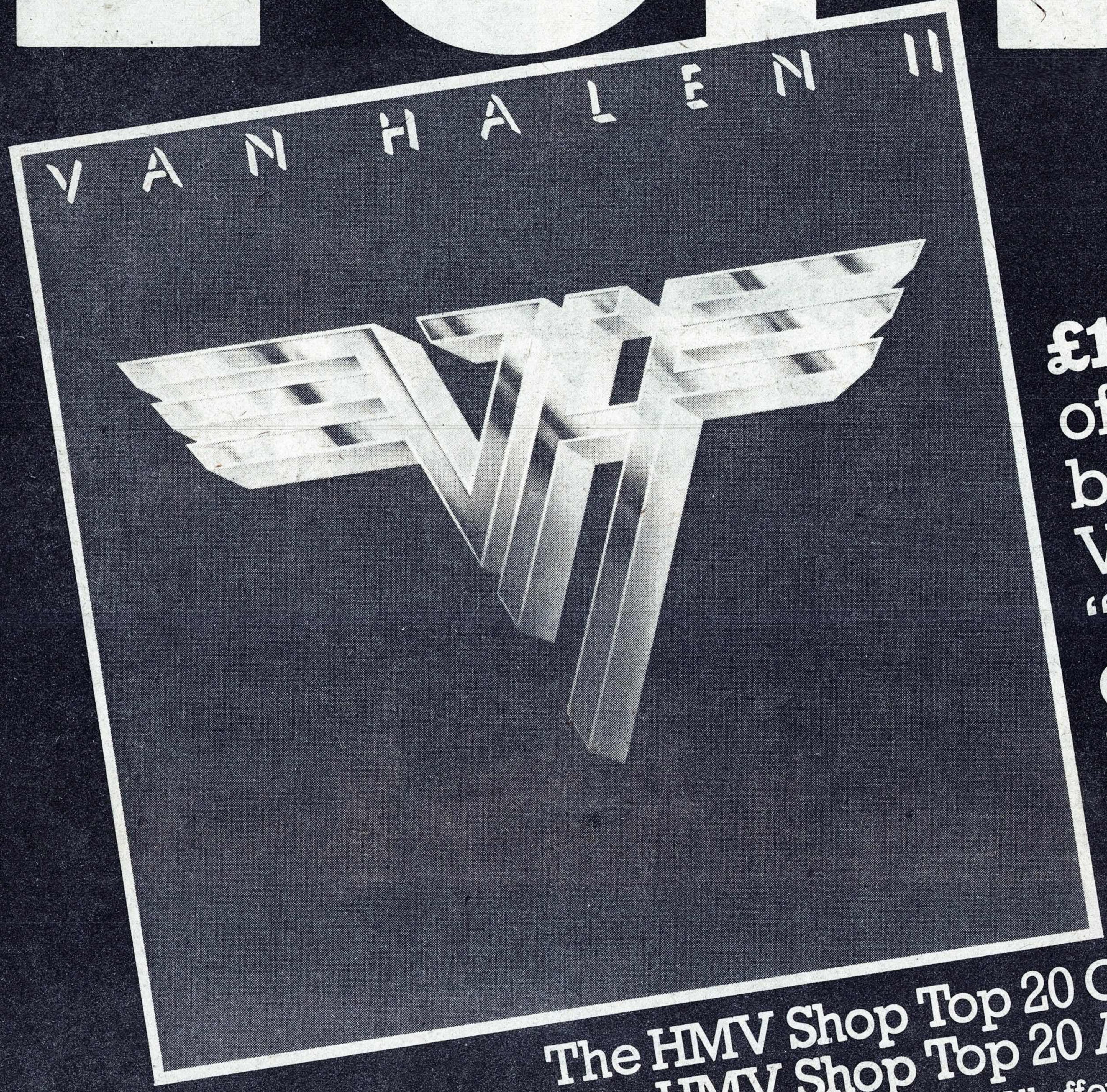

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Jim Kerr

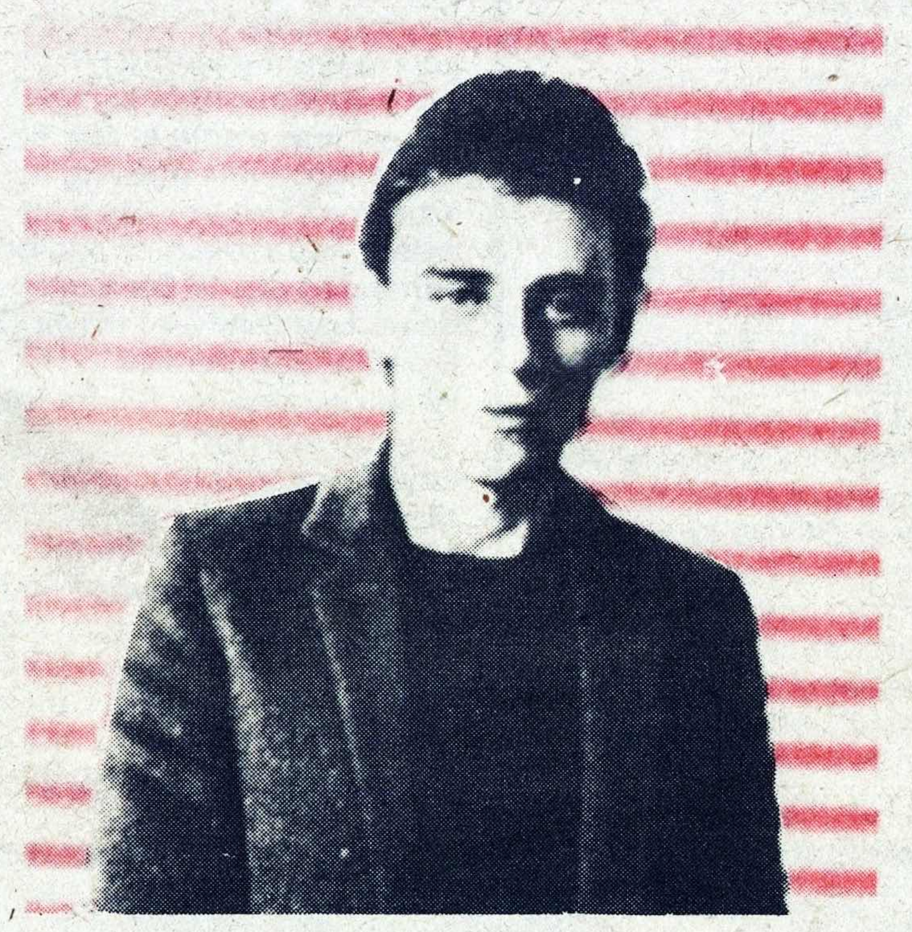
ALBUMS

Brian McGee

Charlie Burchill

Secondhand Simplicity

Derek Forbes



Mick McNeil

SIMPLE MINDS
Life In A Day *(Zoom)*

The real essence of Simple Minds' musical 'modernism' is in fact comparatively old-fashioned and yet their debut album comes close to defining the new sound of '70s which gives so much hope for rock'n'roll in the '80s.

It's 'old-fashioned' because throughout 'Life In A Day' there are obvious reference points: to the late '60s with The Doors (although a Stranglers comparison may also apply), and the early '70s — Cockney Rebel, Roxy Music and Bowie. Also 'old-fashioned' because there are influences of the '70s technocrats interested in the flexibility and range of instrumental sound who're now considered dead or, at the very least, creatively moribund.

Somehow during the upheaval of the last two years, the revolutionary hardcore activists attacked not just attitudes (the root of rock's problems) but the development of technology and (understandably at the time) rejected even its worthy aspects. And it's only now in the post-punk interlude of calm that 'sophistication' and 'professionalism' can once again play a part; even if bands like The Only Ones, XTC and Magazine gained some kind of grudging 'credibility' because of their initial inaccessibility and lack of commercial succcess.

Simple Minds are one of the few to draw on the strings of the early to mid-'70s and construct an 'accessible' *and* 'commercial' formula.

This may appear to be a convincing argument for dismissing the Minds as shallow, derivative and irrelevant; but it's their ability to be selective when embracing these inspirations and to mould them with their own distinctive ideas and visions that creates something that's not essentially innovative but which is certainly rare.

And they offer a future style that doesn't creak and groan with the nuances and tricks of the first two decades of rock music.

Considering that we're now just eight months away from 1980, it's disturbing that so much 'modern' music still echoes with the sounds first discovered 25 years ago. Whereas lyriclly an important part of rock has reflected cultural change, musically its vision has often been a blinkered mythology that raw, minimal chording and strict straight-fours are the fundamentals of energy and excitement. Like Magazine, Simple Minds highlight the transparency of that theory.

This album concerns progression. But it is not the alienating doodlings of experimental electronics, nor does it project a naive amateurism that has made so much recent music incomplete even if a delight. The songwriting and musicianship of this Glasgow band indicate a confidence the result of a composed competence rather than an erratic enthusiasm.

Through ten songs they develop structures and textures, emotions and images that are both stimulating and entertaining. The obvious influences are there, but paradoxically they have produced what is in certain respects an importantly timeless album in that it's not concerned with 'social statement' or 'political dogma' — the feeble critical requirements that have made rock unnecessarily transient because it's so quickly redundant as yesterday's history.

Instead, lyricist and vocalist Jim Kerr focuses on subjects with a more lasting relevance, mainly romance and relationships with 'Someone', 'Sad Affair', 'No Cure', 'Chelsea Girl' and 'Wasteland'. Yet his writing has a depth of observation that transcends the simplicity and teen-romanticism of someone like Pete Shelley.

Kerr's lyrics create tension and an atmosphere not of warmth but a cold, cruel detachment that prohibits wishy sentimentality. They're snatches of real life: remorse, resentment, frustration and — surprisingly — an old-fashioned morality: *"Is it true you're running round now/Is it true they're calling you the Chelsea Girl"*, Kerr primly sneers.

Sharply pithy, his words also portray vivid scenarios. 'Pleasantly Disturbed' is theatrical, an aural thriller that's not so much stated as suggested by the second verse in particular. *"Meanwhile Susan goes out all alone/So many reasons but they're not all her own/Bend till you break, scream if you must/Someone's in her room, someone she don't trust."*

And the final cut 'Murder Story', a highlight of the album, is an excellent projection of a person's paranoia caused by rejection and alienation: *"I feel so insecure I couldn't take another day."*

Yet in his quest for originality, Kerr occasionally fumbles with an impressionism that is as pretentious in its obscurity as some of Howard Devoto's incomprehensible songs. Certainly the significance of the title track and 'All For You' is effectively buried in the fragmentary word-play.

But musically the set is stunningly imaginative; to the extent that every lyric could be indecipherable and *still* the songs would make sense.

Written by Kerr and guitarist-violinist Charlie Burchill they comprise brisk pop melodies ('Someone', 'Sad Affair' and 'No Cure'); hard, concentrated rock ('Chelsea Girl', 'Wasteland', 'Destiny' and 'Murder Story'); the measured quirkiness of 'Life In A Day' and 'All For You'; with 'Disturbed' alone as a lengthy exploration of jagged instrumental shapes and sensurround 'orchestral' grandeur.

Dominated by Kerr's expressive vocals that reveal he's a committed student of the Bowie-Harley-Ferry-Devoto school, Burchill's rhythm playing and Mick McNeil's thin and spiralling organ, all the songs possess indelible melodies. Few have changed greatly in structure or arrangement since they were in demo form, and producer John Leckie has only been tidied up to give sharper impact and added 'commercial' devices such as handclaps and a certain amount of ceremonial pomp.

Although it is an exceptionally polished album some of the Minds' vigour has been glossed by producer John Leckie's complete professionalism. Derek Forbes (bass) and Brian McGee (drums) lose their rhythmic bristle on 'Murder Story', and occasionally Burchill's lead lines prematurely drop from sight.

But most importantly, there is a distinctive Simple Minds style. While Kerr and Burchill form the creative fulcrum, McNeil is the third member of the sound-triumvirate as he swivels between the keyboards of synthesizer, organ and piano.

Strangely enough for a non-writer he has become indispensable to the band: responsible for the textures; an important component to the momentums of the rhythms; and the flexible axis between back and front-lines, contributing an astonishing range of brief but creative solo excursions.

Collectively Simple Minds have the talent, resources and uncluttered vision to be one of the most important post-punk bands. With their uncontrived commercialism they could also be one of the most successful and hopefully an inspiration to others.

For a debut album, 'Life In A Day' reveals maturity even if the potential is far greater than their achievement. Secondhand music can still be a discovery with such an invigorating approach.

Tony Stewart

THE REZILLOS
Mission Accomplished . . . But The Beat Goes On *(Sire)*

In which Sire Records take the line of least Rezillos, P-R-O-D-U-C-T becomes the word, an investment is partially recouped, a fine ex-band is milked dry and everybody ends up dissatisfied (except a few punters).

'Mission Accomplished' captures the rezillient quintet recorded live in Glasgow at one of their farewell gigs, if not *the* actual farewell gig, pretending that it's all alright. What you'd expect: fast, funny, chaotic, well'n'haywire; a good soundtrack for rosy memories (or for the film shown on the *Mauled Fey Cuckoo's Nest)* BUT!!!

It doesn't really add a lot to The Rezillos' debut album 'Can't Stand The Rezillos', where most of this material can be found in slightly less untogether form. The material added to the Rezillo canon by this waxing (including a sublimely gabbled version of Chinnichap's 'Ballroom Blitz') would've made a highly splendid live E.P., but such an artefact would have been considerably less profitable to Sire Records — a fine record company, but a record company nevertheless — so that, regrettably, is that.

It's pointless to bemoan the breakup of The Rezillos because groups don't split when they're winning without impeccable justification, and — most likely — the reasons for the split are probably the logical extensions of the reasons that made the group worthwhile in the first place.

In this case, the Silly Party (Eugene Reynolds and Fay Fife) came to extreme loggerheads with the Sensible Party (guitarist/songwriter John Callis and the rhythm section). The end result will probably be a Totally Silly Group on the one hand and a Totally Sensible Group on the other, whereas what made The Rezillos such a treasure was the combination of silliness and sensibility: Solid Fun.

So farewell Rezillos (etc etc). The mission wasn't really accomplished, but we'll pretend it was for sentimental reasons (sigh). The main function that this noisy, incoherent, slightly shambolic album will serve as an aide-memoire: if you shut your eyes very very tight and shove a dead goldfish up your bum, you can just about hallucinate Fay Fife's hilarious impersonation of a mod window-dummy coming to life as the reincarnation of a deranged gogo dancer, or Reynolds' hilarious impersonation of a tough, dangerous biker, or Callis' hilarious impersonation of a man trying very hard to play the guitar while being subjected to imaginable indignities, or . . .

Look. It's all over now. We're closing. Haven't you got a home to go to? Just piss off, awright?

(Still wish they hadn't broken up, but what can you do?) **Charles Shaar Murray**

Portrait of the artist as a very old man...

JOHN MAYALL
Bottom Line *(DJM)*

Somehow, it's inevitable — his numerous years as white blues pioneer and jazz fusion magnate have evidently exhausted John Mayall's creative reserve.

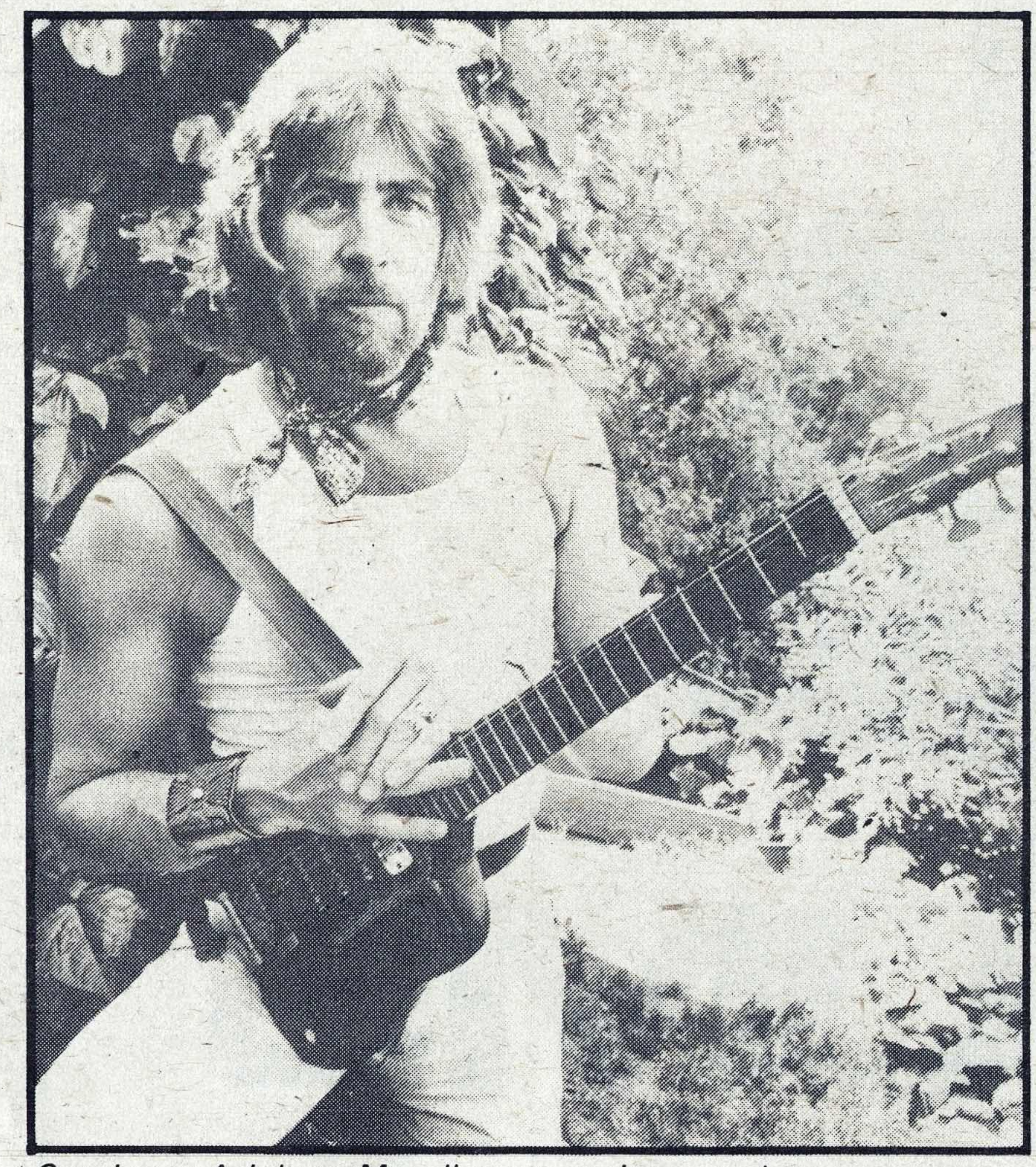
Now crusading in the name of plagiarism, and in the guise of leaden funk, his debut for DJM they loosely herald as "a monster party record". With Mayall playing domineering host to a coast to coast carpet of session stars, he blunders through a jungle of offbeat guitars and bass, cymbals, corny horns and glutenous conga slaps. At times, cranked to unnatural heights, he even tiptoes into the wonderful world of disco.

The lyric content is appropriately mundane, from the hip but hollow title track to the 'tribal earth chant' of 'Celebration' and a limp shot at Jim Capaldi's sexual bravado, 'I'm Gonna Do It'.

Mayall's talents used to be in assembling technicians to interpret his average — but once relevant — compositions, and playing the odd bit of blinding mouth-harp.

Here, his harp bleats plaintively from behind a screen of self-indulgent funk on an album that hobbles — in cuban-heeled cowboy boots — onto a dance-floor ablaze with two-watt bulbs.

Mark Ellen



Specimen: A Johnus Mayallus avec guitarus and strappus

DANNY KIRWAN
Hello There Big Boy! *(DJM)*

Most of Danny Kirwan's time with Fleetwood Mac spanned the limbo between that band's Peter Green and swimming pool periods.

Initially disguised as one third of a hot guitar line-up, his own songs made Graham Nash look like Lee Brilleaux. Easy-listening before it was hip, Kirwan was well-equipped to sidle in on his former colleagues' market, yet has conspicuously failed to do so.

The resemblance is most marked on chuggers like 'Wings Of A Dove' and 'Only You', with the old Ace rhythm section of Tex Comer (bass) and Fran Byrne (drums) exuding McVie / Fleetwood dependability. Kirwan himself abandons lead guitar for the pleasures of winsome crooning, but his voice is too thin to give impact to some merely pleasant material, though a duet with Dana Gillespie on 'Summer Days And Summer Nights' achieves a 'Disney Girls' wistfulness.

As the presence of a Randy Edelman song suggests, 'Big Boy' is sensitive wallpaper of the Noel Edmonds variety. It might sell a few next heatwave.

Harry George

And youngsters as the future of rock 'n' roll etc

POP RIVETS
Pop Rivets *(Pop Rivets)*

THE TROKKOIDS
Confront The Void (The Thrinky Throng) *(Destroy Stewart Granger Records)*

CANNED ROCK
Kinetic Energy *(Canned Rock)*

Three disparate examples of DIY-rock, reflecting the depth of commitment shown by all you loveable loonies out there who get up and *do* it.

Unfortunately, such is the nature of the moderne (sick) world, some are more loveable than others. Canned Rock, for instance, aren't very loveable at all.

Still, independent of distribution, their 'Kinetic Energy' album has sold some 6,000 copies in Hertfordshire. Herts, we surmise, must have more than its fair share of loonies, since Canned Rock sound like ELO and Supertramp diluted through a Kenwood blander — sort of Cabaret Muzak Revoltaire. They were in TV contests like *New Faces* and *Pub Entertainer Of The Year* apparently, but I certainly can't think of any pub that would take 'em, off hand.

It looks like a proper LP, mind, cost £3,000 to make and has even been advertised on Anglia TV. For your £2.99 you get a poster as well.

No such fripperies for The Trokkoids, whose 'Confront The Void' doesn't look like any sort of LP. That's because it's a cassette. Each one costs them about ten bob to produce and they give them away outside schools, it says here.

Part of the 'raw and vital Hounslow revolution', The Trokkoids think of themselves as psychedelic schoolboys doing a psychotic sweep of sound. Can't argue with that. 'Confront The Void' is pretty crafty electronic dribble, replete with harsh tape edits, indiscriminate feedback and Nembutal narration. Fairly seductive if you're feeling dopey; certainly dopey if you're feeling seductive.

If you thought 'The Faust Tapes' was a snip at 12s 6d, you might think nothing for 'Confront The Void' is a bit steep. The Trokkoids can be contacted c/o 16 Davenant Road, London NW1 or via The Free Shop under the Westway. Ask for Bill Badger.

If you see Pop Rivets anywhere, you'll be lucky. Medway-based, they've around five gigs to their credit. They borrowed £300 to get their album made (which comes in a fetching white sleeve complete with sewing instructions — pay no more than £2.25) and for about three hours it was the best-selling LP in Rochester.

"When I was young/I had a Beatles wig/But those long pointed boots/They were just too big/But now I'm older/I'm just 19/My feet have grown/And there's a whole new scene . . ."

So says singer Wild Billy Childish in an impassioned introduction to the finest, most honest rock'n'roll record I've heard this year.

Their songs are angular and driven with Clash/'Janie Jones' immediacy; the severe tempo changes will throw you across the room. 'Disco Fever', for example, manages to put down that form in a wholly unsanctimonious manner and is rhythmically very funny — peculiar and ha ha.

In Will Power they've an entirely erudite and blissfully cliched guitarist and an inspired 'everyman' vocalist in Childish. 'Pop Rivets' is the most concerted mania I've heard since Johnny Moped's mammoth lost 'Cycledelic'. They say they've learned from their mistakes — sheesh, I'd like to see 'em get any better.

Made in 1979 for 1979, and I'm glad they don't mess about.

Monty Smith

INSTANT FUNK
I Got My Mind Made Up *(Salsoul)*

Listen: Instant Funk are an aptly named eight-some whose solemn mission it is to tilt planet Earth off its collective ass and *paaaaarty.*

Those unweaned on funk noises (eg myself) could do worse than to check out their latest LP for initiation into a life of finger-poppin' happy-footed meaninglessness, where everyday is a heatwave. So I'll Tell It Like It Is.

Two sides, eight tracks, chock-full of solid grooves and whackiness, swirling Arpblips, soul-dripping horn charts, and a maze of metallic cross rhythms that chug and meander over a big, big bass.

Listen: *'Ooh-ooh! Uh-uh! Yeaaah!* they chant, and you'd better believe it. But hear Captain Nemo's foreboding gobbledygook in 'Dark Varder'. Listen to the 100,000 strong stadium roar, the volcanic bass rumble and the Brazilia-Futurisimo scatting in 'Wide World of Sports'.

Listen . . . nah, don't listen — BOOGIE!

Rick Joseph

BOOKER T AND THE MGs
Time Is Tight: The Best Of Brooker T *(Stax)*

Attention! If Mod makes a comeback then somewhere amongst all the parkas and sidevents there's got to be space for a wee resurgence of interest in Brooker T & The MGs — the nucleus of the Stax house band way back in the (gulp) '60s, the founding fathers of funk, the rhythm section on the Otis Redding classics and the original version of 'B-A-B-Y', the responsible parties for a host of all-time instrumental grooves . . .

Music to do your best dancing to, but cool y'know?

The first five years of Brooker T & The MGs are more than adequately covered by a 'Best Of Booker T & The MGs', which was still available on Atlantic last time I looked (unless some smoothly-dressed WEA chap with a company car and a house in Esher has deleted it), and now EMI (Stax's current distributors) have issued a companion volume with only one track in common.

'Time Is Tight' rounds up a few tracks by the band interspersed with excerpts from MGs guitarist Steve Cropper's long-unavailable solo album 'With A Little Help From My Friends' and even a track by a studio MGs featuring the original rhythm section with ringers replacing Cropper and Brooker T himself.

Not to mention a trio of toe-tappers by the Mar-Keys (Booker & Co plus The Memphis Horns).

Listen! There's Booker, simultaneously cool, funky and chic on organ, Steve Cropper proving that he was the man for which the Fender Telecaster was invented, Duck Dunn and Al Jackson being just *remorseless* on bass and drums.

Some of this stuff may sound a little laid-back to the more frenzy-oriented modern ear. But for those into soul grooves and cool blues, this album is just what you need when it's 3 am and you're a little tired but you still want to dance.

Charles Shaar Murray

Terry (left) turns a neat chewn, as might sister Cheryl.

TERRY GARTHWAITE
Hand In Glove *(Fantasy)*

Those acquainted with the Californian cult combo Joy Of Cooking will doubtless recognise Terry Garthwaite as a founder member. I'm not and didn't, but evidently should have been if they sound anything like this fine solo album.

The mass of styles she adopts are not a tedious attempt to prove versatility by someone who failed to make it big in any one idiom. They're just a tasteful selection of crisp, unindulgent funk music, at its vibrant and sensuous best, and a few downright sassy jazz pieces — both self-penned and old standards — threaded with lazy acoustic bass and shuffling drums.

Comparisons to Joplin are by no means unfounded, but tend to overshadow a far greater range and expression. Look no further than the persuasive 'Here Today', again using a shifting jazz rhythm section to blend with an unusually sensitive vocal.

Anyone hearing only the single cut — an appalling funk/disco cover of Van Morrison's 'Moondance' — would be rightly tempted to show Ms Garthwaite the door, but that blatant commercial bid excluded, 'Hand In Glove' slides in very smoothly.

Mark Ellen

CHERYL LYNN
Cheryl Lynn *(CBS)*

I do not have the foggiest notion where all these black ladies with incredible voices come from, but I certainly wish that whoever is responsible for discovering them would make it their business to provide them all with suitable material.

Cheryl Lynn has a hugely pretty voice, but her songs are about as interesting as yesterday's papers. They sound half-hearted and light-headed — not heavy enough to use as a paper weight. Timid tunes, over-worked and over-extended by a duo of whacked out (but probably *very* cool) producers with big ideas and small acorns.

And if 'Nothing To Say' ain't the same riff as 'Cindy Incidentally' then I'll eat this page.

John Hamblett

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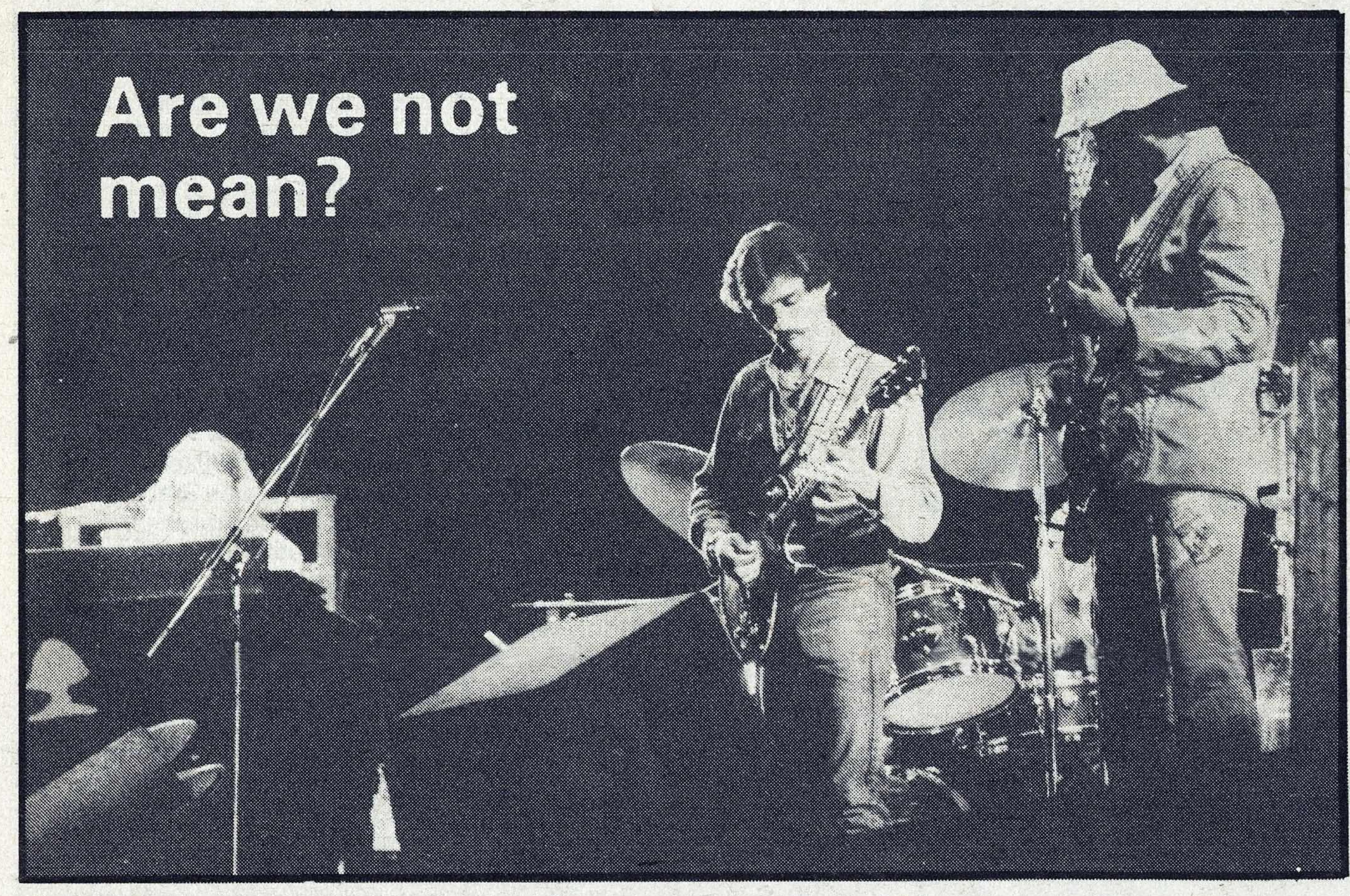


Some of the Allmans in dynamic stage show situation. Pic: Robert Ellis

Allmans endure another gratuitous critical drubbing surprise, sort of

ALLMAN BROTHERS
Enlightened Rogues
(Capricorn)

The title of this album was apparently procured from a blithe self-definition bro' Duane chose for himself and his crew in a moment of rare loquacity. But, despite all the hideous crap that's gone down in the name of The Allman Brothers since Duane's untimely death, I'm still hesitant to drop the hammer on this. In fact as Allmans product goes it's fairly respectable.

The reasons behind this reassembly are obvious. After the band's final croak with both the execrable 'Win, Lose Or Draw' and the offensive 'Windows', its members withdrew to undertake solo projects, all of which — Dickey Betts' Great Southern, the Greg Allman Band (not to mention the star-crossed liaison with Cher, which we won't) and Chuck Leavell's Sea Level — have been relative commercial failures.

Meantimes Phil Walden, Jimmy Carter's shady bagman, was plotting for a reunion and Betts spelt it out when he stated that he'd be game if his second GS album failed. It did just that, both he and Allman were up for it, Butch Trucks was dragged out of convalescence and Jai Jimmy Johansen split from Sea Level. Only Leavell stood his ground, keeping Sea Level in motion, but he wasn't an original Allman anyway, so his presence was not essential. Betts, however, dragged two of his GS compadres — Dan Toter and Don Goodflies — in to complete the lineup, and all was set.

'Enlightened Rogues' has already achieved its goal in the States, bulleting up the Top 30 there. It's probably then of only incidental import that the record itself is the Allmans' best since 'Eat A Peach'. For this, much of the credit should go to producer Tom Dowd, who obviously worked overtime honing down the songs, arrangements and all into a substantial whole.

The original Allmans — caught at their strongest on the 'Fillmore East' album — had an enviable grasp of dynamics and a killing frontline in guitar pyrotechnics; only their blues base tended to restrict their scope. Never an innovative group, if nothing else the Allmans presaged the whole 'South Is Gonna Rise Again' grits 'n' chitlin schtick that, perhaps, culminated in the election and inauguration of Carter himself.

The Allmans being to the Carter regime what Linda Ronstadt and her coke cowboys are to California's Governor Gerry Brown, a reunion was obviously desirable, even though Greg Allman had dynamited all the respect he could ever hope to achieve by turning 'narc fink'.

Only Dickey Betts was able to stay on his feet, and it's obvious that Betts is the leader of this resurrection, hogging the writing credits as he does. There's one Greg-penned whine about the perils of a big city party-down (the same old bathos thinly disguised as poignancy) entitled 'It Just Ain't That Easy', also a respectable rendition of Little Willie John's 'Need Your Love So Bad' that's still a zillion miles below Peter Green's sublime version — but otherwise it's Betts calling the shots.

The results are surprisingly good: nothing you haven't heard before but . . . 'You Can't Take It With You When You Go' and 'Crazy Love' are just the sort of fare the Allmans were pumping out on their second album. Still, Betts is no great songwriter and the two staples in the band's repertoire — the instrumental, this time called 'Pegasus', and the wimp ballad, 'Sail Away' — are pure trite trash.

This is really nothing to bother about, but on its own terms it is indeed exceptional.

Nick Kent

Greg shares an apres-review joke with Nick Kent. Pic: Neal Preston

VARIOUS ARTISTS
New Wave From The Heart
(Planet)

This uncomfortably formal collection of messy, featureless songs from seven underdeveloped Yorkshire rock groups is a sadly worthless artefact.

It's another example of over-keen independent enterprise supplying access to over-excited, imitative young groups to make records. The album has been scratched together with a total lack of discipline or discrimination — it contains nothing positive or refreshing.

The sloppy music on this record is not to be 'consumed' or appreciated, just wearily acknowledged. You can't help but be patronising; like, nice to hear something's stirring but, er, a little more ingenuity and patience, *please*. Each of the groups (poor sods) sound so starry-eyed that they're contributing to an actual album that they're numb to the fundamental function of entertaining, thrilling etc.

'Naive From The Heart' would be a more appropriate title. Not one of the grubby groups justifies being captured at such an immature stage, and not one remotely hints at any possible potential — The Squad, The Diks, Subliminal Cuts, Eyes At Risk, Negatives (*not* the Modest Young, Kevin Snap, Merlin Motors, Alan Dial line up currently being produced by Danny Baker), The Prams and Vice Squad sound all but interchangeable. They reveal the basic, unexceptionable ability to chew over '76 cliches with spluttering competence.

It's not fair to them, or us, that they're contained in such thoughtless surroundings.

Paul Morley

Imports

The great thing about the rivalry between various import companies is the way that each of 'em is being forced to search further afield in order to come up with something that the others are unable to offer. And points winners of this week's From Here To Obscurity prize are Parke Records, whose man in Minneapolis has emerged with 'El-Cee Notes' by the **Lamont Cranston Band**, an eight-piece who record for the local Waterhouse label.

El-Cee are basically a blues band with knobs on — the knobs being a penchant for good, old-fashioned 'Woodchopper's Ball' type swing riffs, as exemplified by the band's opening '12 Swing', and a tendency for happy fraternising with Junior Walker type jumps (a description which befits the lengthy 'E Jam'). But bottom-lining are the blues, brass-bound and rock-shaped, with Willie Dixon's 'Close To You', Howling Wolf's 'Riding With Daddy' and Sonny Boy Williamson's 'Checkin' Up On My Baby' figuring among the band's repertoire.

Side one of the album, which is studio recorded, spotlights the more adventurous aspects of the guitar-playing Hayes brothers, who together with Bruce McCabe (vocals, keyboards), Joe Sherolman (bass), Jim Novak (drums), Billy Shiell (trumpet, flute) and Dick Perna (sax), comprise Lamont Cranston. And side two — taped direct from the P.A. mixer at Minneapolis' Cabooze Bar — demonstrates El-Cee's blues-for-groovin' approach, all shake-yo-butt-cos-here-comes-de-blooze-harp and other time-honoured Klook's expressions.

I guess that many will consider the band to be 10 years behind the times — after all, blues-band has become a dirty phrase in Britain of late, a term not relished by those who live in hip city. But El-Cee aren't your usual, everyday, creak at the knees, early '60s leftovers. They play as though they've just discovered the joy of music. Which is why El-Cee get my personal nod of approval.

Art Garfunkel's sleeve blurb to **'Leah Kunkel'** (CBS), explains that Leah's a great singer in the tradition of Billie Holiday, Don and Phil Everly, Aretha Franklin, James Taylor and Linda Ronstadt, a statement which tells you more about Artie (Ronstadt and Taylor on the same plane as Holiday and Franklin?) than it does about the talents of Cass Elliott's sister.

And from the title track of 'Back To The Drawing Board' (Beserkely) we can glean the fact that all has not gone as well as expected for **The Rubinoos**, whose second official album it is. However, despite the implied re-shuffle, there would appear to be no real change in plan for Beserkely's rock-popsters (good news to all those who hailed 'I Think We're Alone Now' as a classic single) for Matthew King Kaufman and Glen Kolotkin still provide the knob-twiddling on a set that — apart from from the inclusion of 'Hold Me' (once a hit for P J Proby) — is formed by a batch of Rubinoo originals.

End of communique.

Fred Dellar

CLOVER
The Clover Chronicle
(Fantasy)

"If the obvious — that success in the rock music arena is totally unrelated to musical ability — ever needed to be proved, then Clover would be people's exhibit number one."

So claim the sleeve notes, in hard-done-by tones, apparently oblivious of the role of style, innovation, statement, mystique, etcetera. Actually, startling evidence of Clover's *own* musical ability, and hence their excuse for the past 12 years' commercial failings, both seem equally absent.

As all the material was recorded before '71 (when Clover and Fantasy parted company), it's less of a bid for reappraisal by the band, and more a desperate attempt by Fantasy to scrape a few last greenbacks from their archaic back catalogue.

'Chronicle' makes tedious listening indeed, and despite recent remixing of its original demo quality, every track still sounds undeniably bland. It's all shuffling country rock and slow electric bluegrass, epitomised by the band's anthem 'Chicken Butt' — shit-kickin', finger-pickin' moonshine music, with a few poultry noises 'n' yeehaws as a bonus.

Bands like the Ozarks were doing justice to this kind of stuff five years later. Now it just seems outdated, outrated and well worth a miss.

Mark Ellen

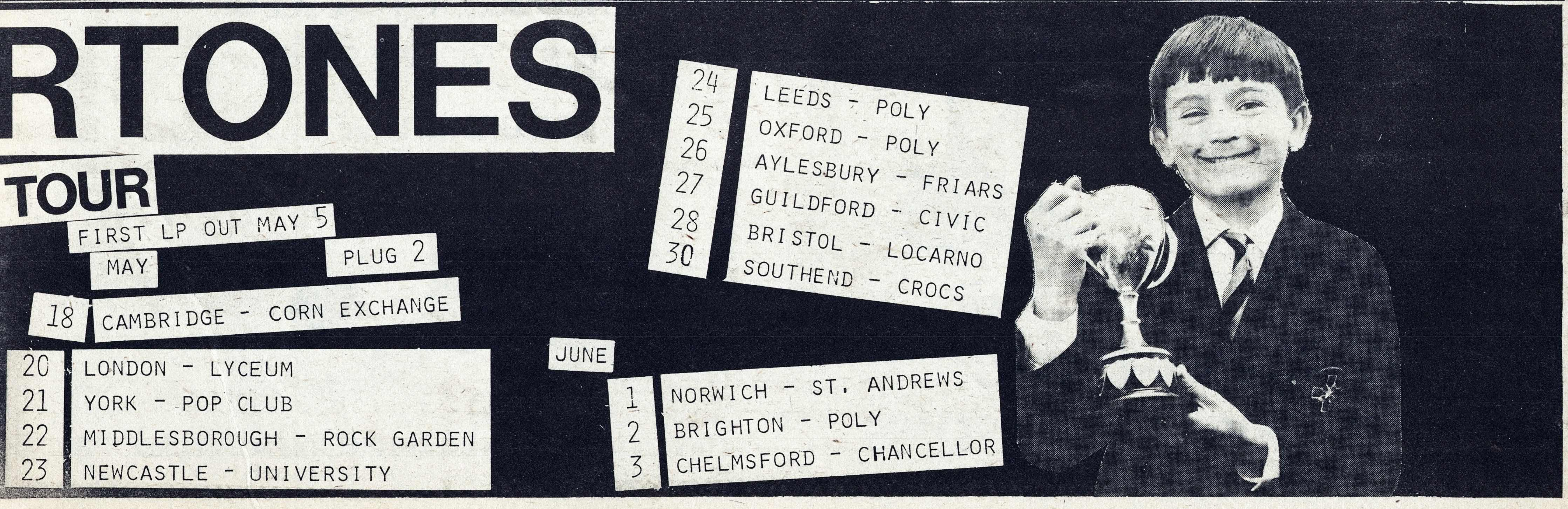
JUDY COLLINS
Hard Time For Lovers
(Elektra)

'Hard Times For Lovers' is a painful amalgam of watery didactic macro-slush, sung with oh-so-correct diction and my-such-controlled-breathing against a Hip Difficult Listening backdrop of Tate & Lyle sugar-cubed mis-arrangements.

There is, of course, a remote possibility that Ms Collins isn't a lapsed naturist nun, lost in a Kansas cornfield with nothing but a hockey-stick and a newly acquired vocabulary of krypto-groovy promiscuity; and there is also the possibility that your reviewer isn't just a bit over the top with cynicism — actually, I'm a raving romantic — but I still think that this album is unreservedly BLOODY AWFUL.

A hard time for listeners.

Rick Joseph



AURACLE
City Slickers *(Chrysalis)*
DIXIE DREGS
Night Of The Living Dregs *(Capricorn)*
TKO
Let It Roll *(Inifinity)*
JOURNEY
Evolution *(CBS)*

These four disposable offerings effortlessly cruise the commercial freeway in the name of trite all-American excess.

The least bearable is Auracle's second album, which slots in like a beefed-up Chuck Mangione with a fussy selection of jazz/rock pieces, all riddled with brass and brash sax solos. Without vocals, and with ceaseless attempts at startling crescendos, this respectably 'excitable' music would make an ideal backing track for one of those utterly tedious car-chase scenes in *Starsky And Hutch.*

Suffering similar 'classical' overtones, the tiresome Dixie Dregs album alternates thickly textured jazz/rock, strictly 'Modern' discordant structures — generously laced with violin, and mechanical Southern country jigs. This motley mixture inspires feelings almost as excruciating as its Edvard Munch-styled horrowshow cover.

Almost as respectable, despite their quarried-not-born lyrical leanings, Seattle-based power rock band TKO perpetuate the old James Dean mentality in its most rye-and-punch-drunk hackneyed form. This debut album is derivative of virtually every prententious, heavyweight combo you care to name from '72 onwards, and ploughs through a rack of inane stompers with as little flair as variation. 'TKO', incidentally, stands for Technical Knock-Out, if you're interested in getting your ears boxed.

If you're not, Journey's 'Evolution' has a smoothly professional gloss that simmers with rich harmonies and searing guitar solos through a bunch of songs that mean nothing — absolutely *zilch.* Tailored solely for the airwaves, their medium-weight slick rock has been so over-refined and recycled that it's less than ineffectual, it's inverted into a Yes-like sentimentality.

Slip into something casual, spin the wheel of your Pontiac, and wack in the eight-track cassette of this album. *"Sail in dreams beyond the silver moon"*, it croons, as you ease into overdrive and fall sound asleep.

Mark Ellen

NUCLEUS
Out Of The Long Dark *(Capitol)*

Out of the dark maybe, but not out of the woods.

Like every Ian Carr and Nucleus album before it, this is just polite, worthy, sensible British 'jazzrock'. No more, no less. Few chances are taken with either material or musicianship (reedsman Brian Smith honourably excepted). Carr's own trumpet and flugelhorn remain unexpressive and distinctly dreary. His 'compositions' repeat age-old formats; their ordinariness seems to verge on quiet desperation.

Nucleus: a depressing case of too many Arts Council grants, or what? If you must go Nuclear, backtrack to 'Elastic Rock', the first album featuring the then rather interesting Chris Spedding. It's still their best.

Angus MacKinnon

Special Spot The Boys Comp.

Get your entry forms from TKO (the hunks above) or Journey (the honkies on top) — do it today!

SISTER SLEDGE
We Are Family *(Atlantic)*

With 'C'Est Chic' at the top of the chart, a new Chic album is inevitably premature. But that's what this is, albeit under another name.

The Sisters Sledge — Kathie, Debbie, Kim, Joni, and Percy — provide the vocals, and very seductive they are too. There's no question, though, about who's really in charge. "All songs written, arranged, and conducted by Nile Rodgers and Bernard Edwards", says the sleeve, and just in case you're still in any doubt, it adds: "Produced by Bernard Edwards and Nile Rodgers for the CHIC Organisation Ltd."

In other words, Sister Sledge are the fortunate beneficiaries of the talents that have turned a bunch of obscure session musicians into a multi-million dollar concern.

Already, of course, the single from this album is in the Top 20. The lyrics of 'He's The Greatest Dancer' recall the sort of literacy that Leiber and Stoller brought to the Coasters' records, but this song is by no means the strongest on the set. The likes of 'Thinking Of You' and 'Easier To Love' have the same subtle melodic appeal of Chic's own hit 'I Want Your Love', and they're propelled gently along with an identical rhythmic finesse. Along with Edwards on bass and Rodgers on guitar, Tony Thompson the drummer must be one of the most restrained and tasteful musicians operating in disco music.

The Chic Organisation never — but never — bludgeon you onto the dance floor. Their tactic is one of unswerving sophistication, and that's paid dividends, musically and financially.

Bob Edmands

HEAD EAST
Live! *(A&M)*

Funny how things change without getting much different, so to speak.

I used to see these guys somehere like fifth on heavy metal orientated bills deep in the heart of Texas — circuit sloggers and always will be.

Now look at 'em: fancy double live albums with a wacky title, all the trappings and pretentions of the nouveau arrive! It's a living, but Head East — while nothing to whet the critical knife on — are damned mediocre when you reach the bottom line. Gormless riffs of the Southern fried variety do battle with John Schlitt's (an unfortunate handle for a nice boy from St Lous) anguished larynx.

Being a double there's a lot of this to wade through but it's such patently redundant brain rot that I won't bore you with details.

If you like this sort of rubbish you can't read anyway, so what's the odds?

Max Bell

TONY WILSON
Catch One *(Bearsville)*

On which Tony Wilson (ex-Hot Chocolate) proves that black does not necessarily equal funk. Because Tony Wilson plays a neat, swinging, occasionally bland, but mostly sweet synthesis of pop music old and new — somewhere between a black Paul Simon and a white Linda Lewis.

There is hardly anything on offer to get excited about; in fact, if I were telling my mother about this album mellow is a word that would be hard to avoid. An album to smile along to rather than laugh at, whistle with rather than dance to.

Play it to *your* mother, see what she thinks.

John Hamblett

ASHRA
Correlations *(Virgin)*

Ashra: an unadventurous aural mural-making German group. Are *you* sitting comfortably?

Synthesized loops, sweeps, peeps. Light listening. Ambivalent . . . lazy . . . oh . . . think I'm falling . . . asl . . . eep . . . eeps, peeps.

A music without ambition or ambitions. Pleasant. Yes, it's 'perfect'. Ideal? For ideal homes? For hang-gliding films? For building society adverts?

I just scream! I WANT TO STAY AWAKE!

Ian Penman

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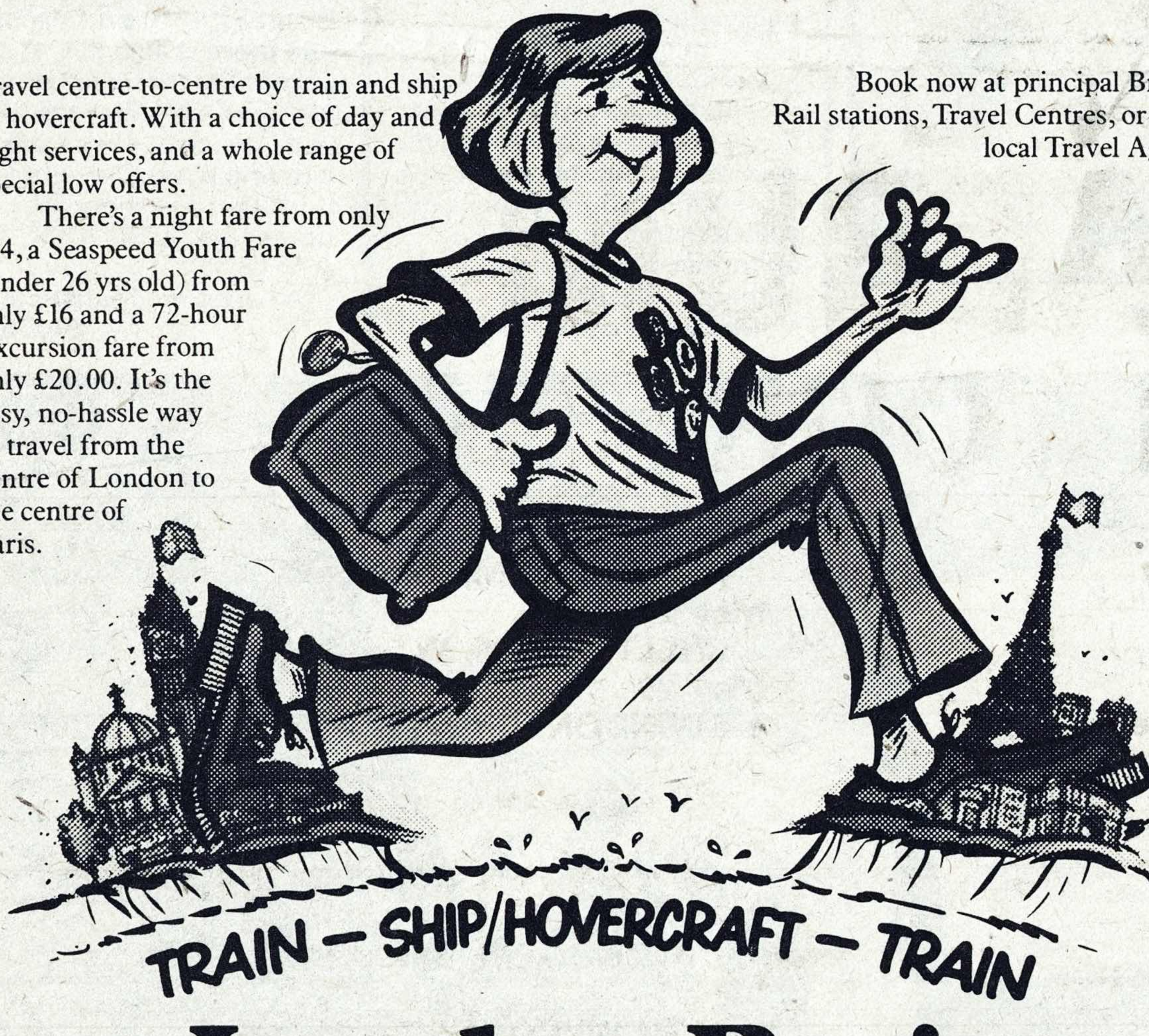

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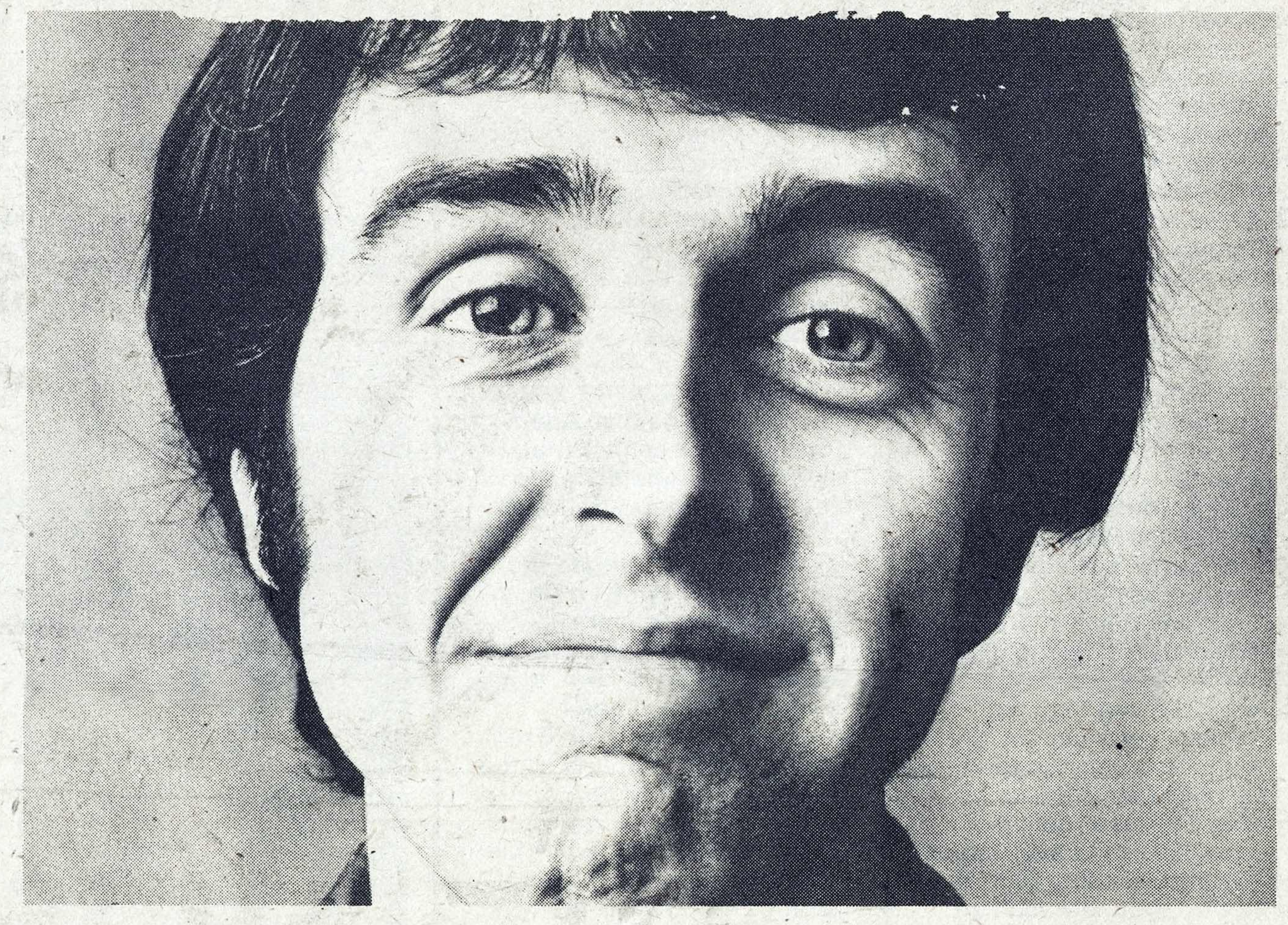
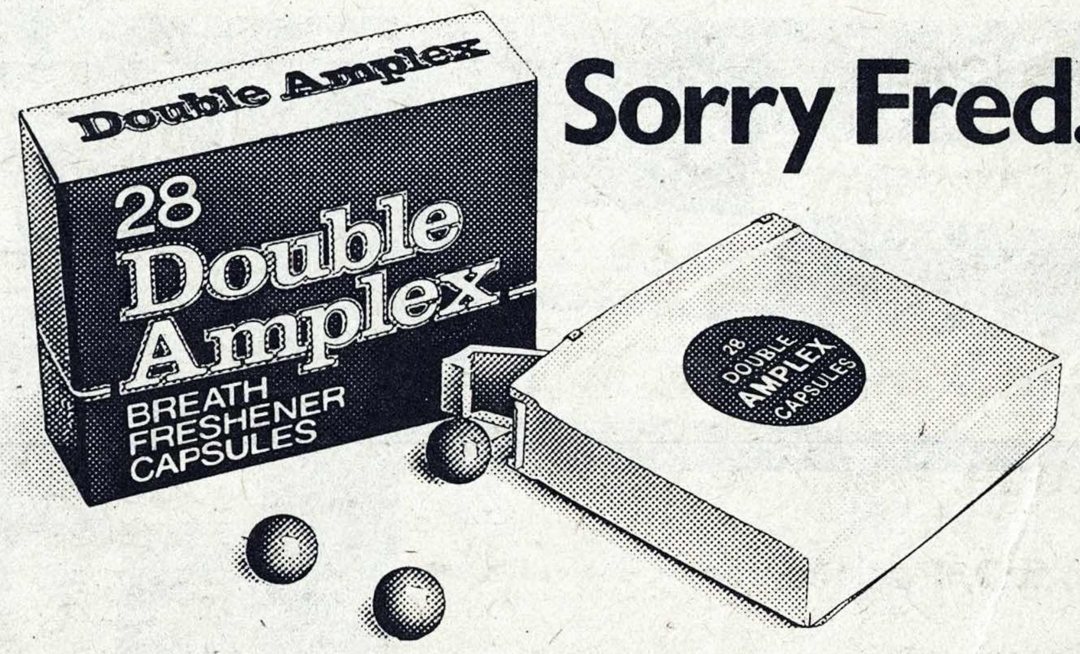


Fred went for the interview with a new suit, a great set of references, a winning smile...

and bad breath.

Sorry Fred.



He should have remembered Double Amplex.

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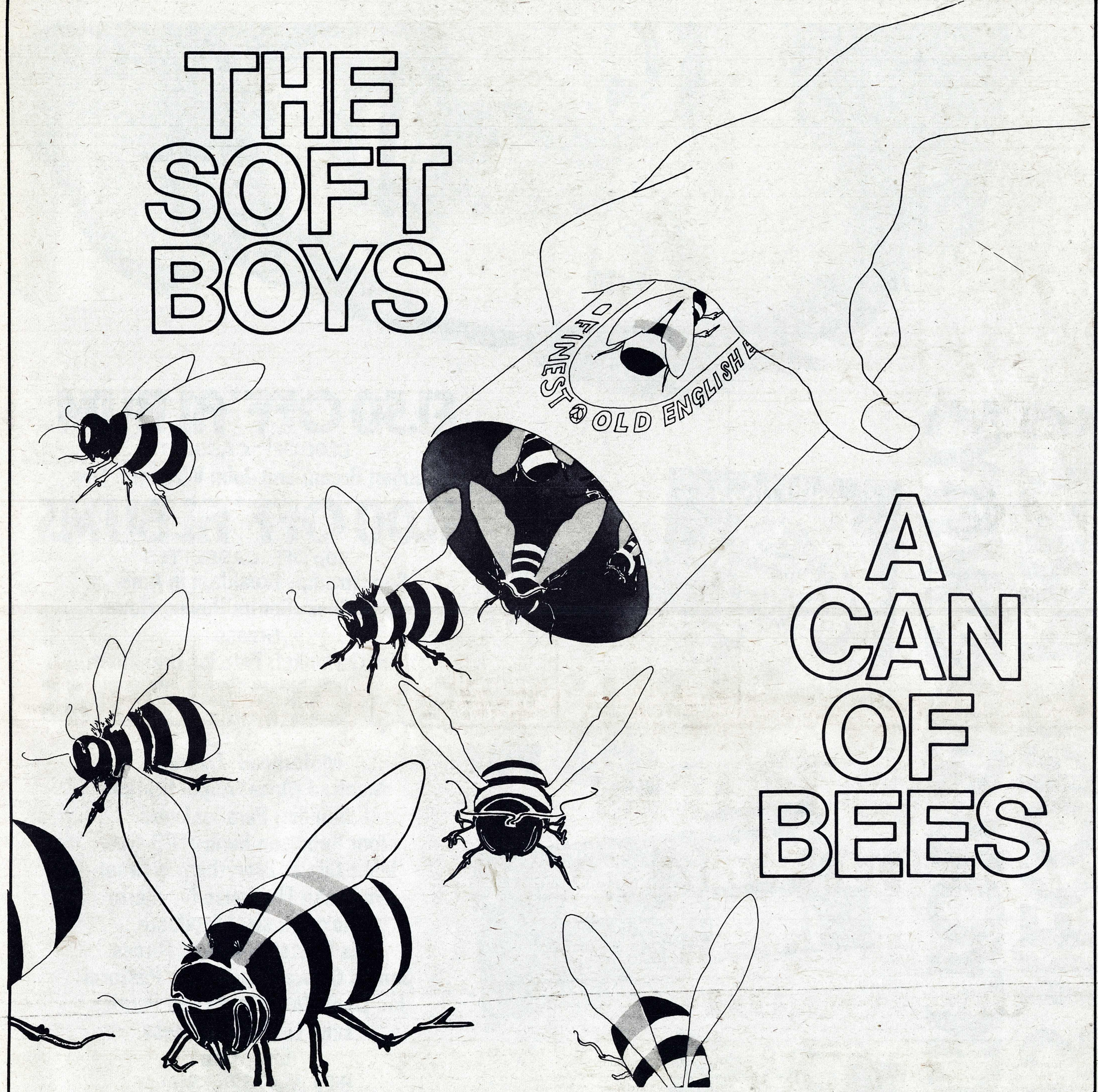
THE SOFT BOYS



A CAN OF BEES

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April 27
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April 28
BIRMINGHAM, Bournebrook Hotel
May 1
CANTERBURY, College of Art
May 4
SCARBOROUGH, Penthouse
May 8
HUDDERSFIELD, Polytechnic
May 9
READING, University
May 10
PORTSMOUTH, Polytechnic

May 12
COVENTRY, Warwick University
May 14
SWANSEA, Circles
May 15
BOURNEMOUTH, Maison Royale II
May 16
PLYMOUTH, Woods
May 17
EXETER, Routes
May 20
NEWCASTLE, Polytechnic
May 22
SCUNTHORPE, Tiffanys
May 23
BLACKPOOL, Norbreck Castle Hotel
May 24
STOKE, North Staffs Polytechnic

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May 26
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May 29
SWINDON, Brunel Rooms
June 1
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June 2
LONDON KENSINGTON, The Nashville
June 5
BIRMINGHAM, Barbarellas
June 7
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June 9
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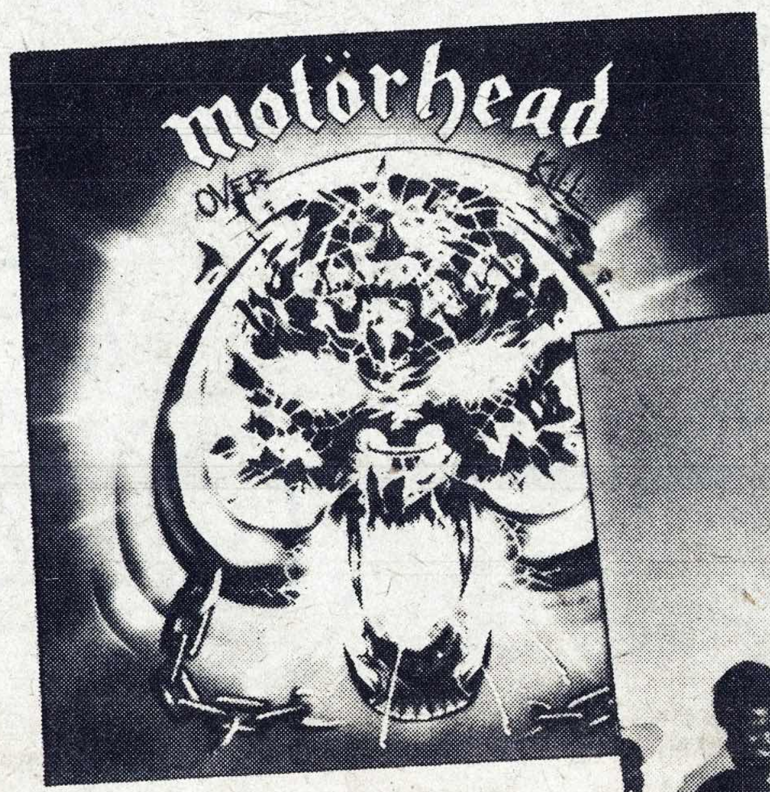

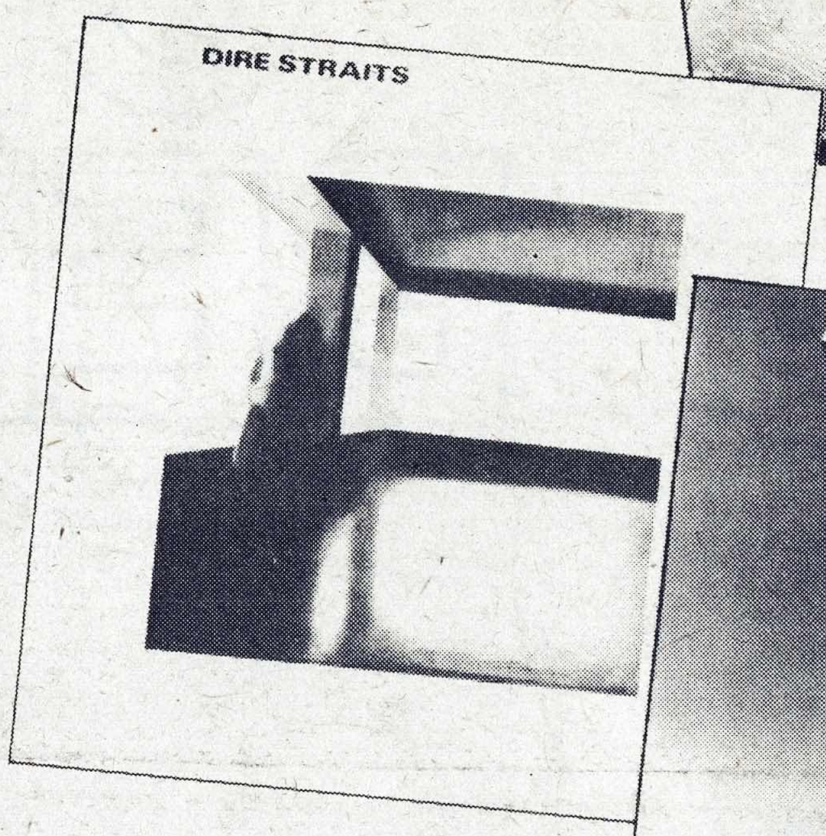

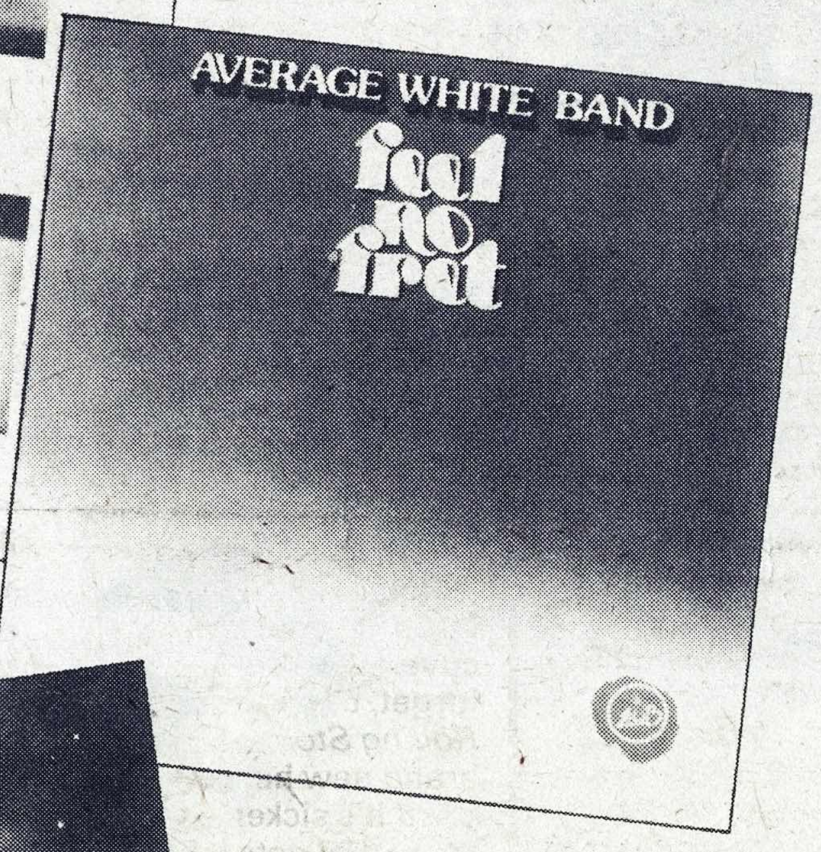

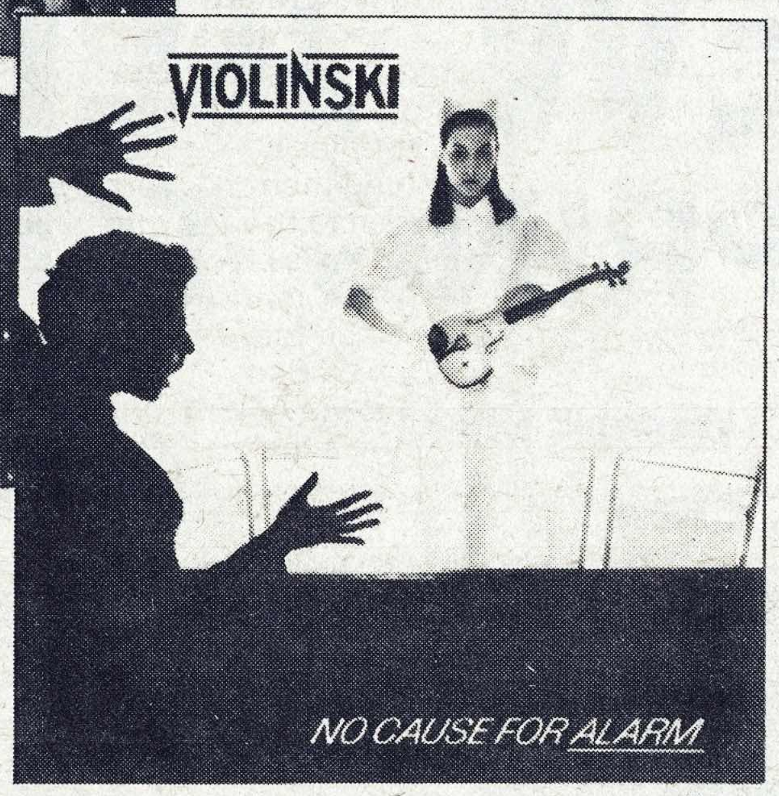

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Lene Lovich: Stateless
Toto: Toto
Billy Joel: 52nd Street
Gladys Knight: Gladys Knight
Barry White: My Message is Love
Neil Diamond: You Don't Bring Me Flowers
Johnny Mathis: Best Days of My Life
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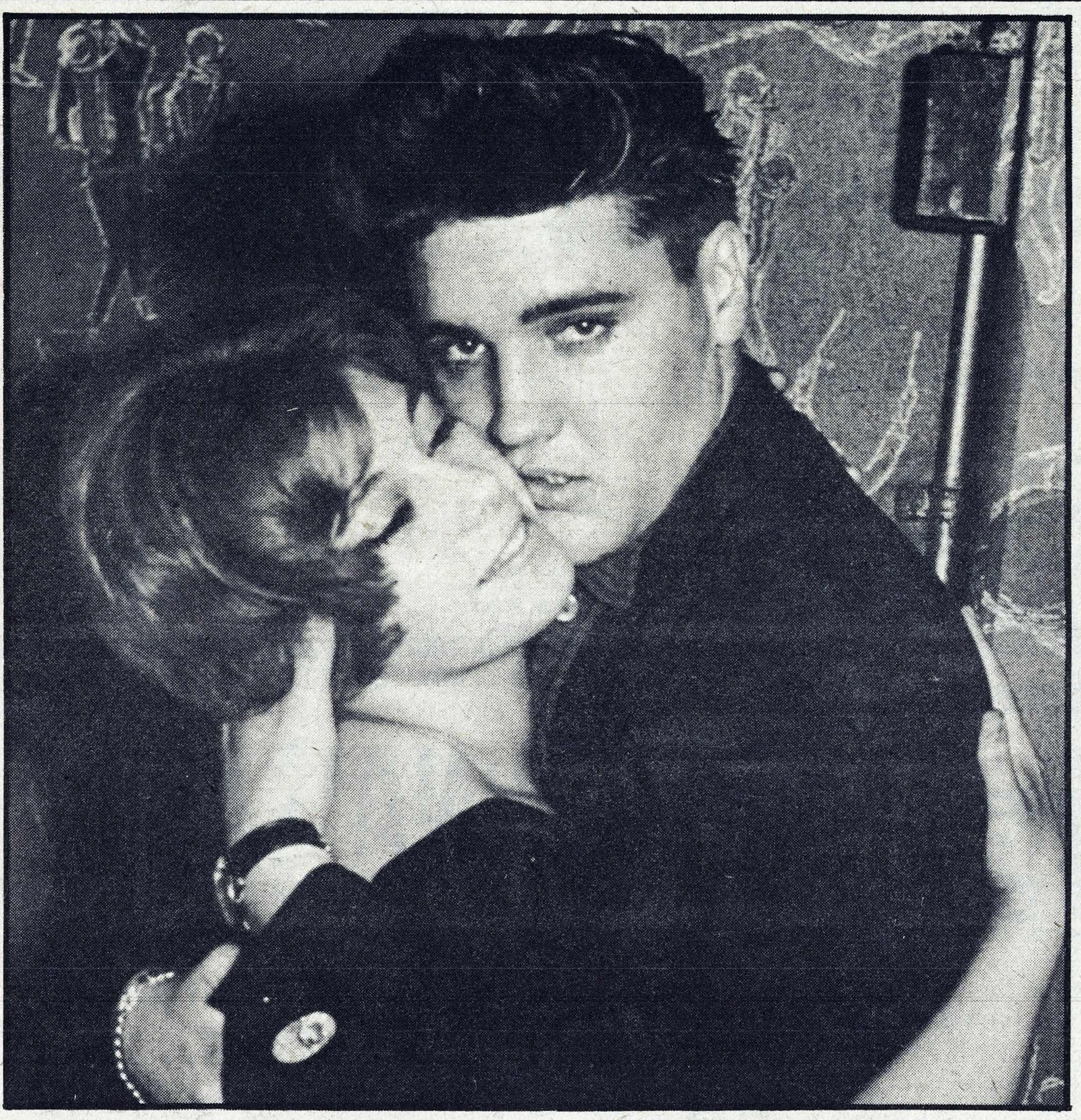


PRIVATE ELVIS
Edited by Diego Cortez
(Fey)

Elvis the GI in decadent Europe is the theme here — and not all that decadent either. Two hundred pages of colour-tinted pictures of El posing with buddies and dames in Deutschland broken up with a few interviews and articles in both German and English. Probably good value for Elvisophiles.

PRINT

RABBLE WITHOUT A CAUSE

THE SIXTIES: The Decade Remembered Now By The People Who Lived It Then.

Edited by Lynda Rosen (Rolling Stone Press $9.95).

This book is big, thick and thorough. Each year of the '60s is taken, prefaced by a page calendar of important and trivial dates, then chewed over in about half a dozen short superficial essays — groovy '60s somebodies (Tom Wolfe, Diana Vreeland, David Bailey, Wavy Gray) scribbling dribbles about groovy '60s happenings (surf, the unmade-up mouth, swinging London pop concerts) that they happened to have a finger in.

But this isn't the *Vogue Book Of Beauty,* dear. If it's a *Rolling Stone* project, it must be youth, death and mayhem — all nicely arranged by now, of course, with just a pinch of Pop Art, The Twist and Spiderman tossed in here and there so we won't think '60s youth didn't know how to enjoy itself.

The boastful sub-title is also a safety hatch to be opened against accusations of cashing in, grabbing a cheap $10 out of other people's holocausts: "Listen, I Lived THROUGH it, I was THERE!"

Rebel with a journal. The painstakingly "indiviual" views which make up the bulk of the writing might be fine in another book, but in one containing such horrors as this they seem self-centred and often disrespectful. It's the photography here that learns you the lesson; I've never seen so many great photographs in one book in my life. Coretta King staring with blank contempt at the camera as she and her four children leave the plane that brought Martin Luther King's body back to Atlanta; black and white students sitting together boldly in segregated cafeterias; James Meredith, the first black to enter the University of Mississippi, surround by the US marshals President Kennedy to sent in to protect him from the racist students as he enrolls (Kennedy also sent the Army onto the campus when the rednecks just wouldn't leave Meredith alone, several of the trouble-makers ending up dead); mutilated widowed Asian women and cock-a-hoop GIs — stupid, fat, pampered bunglers of the sort who carried out the My Lai Massacre.

The '60s politics were a minefield of heroism and tragedy. There were real, heart-breaking martyrdoms, deaths which disgusted and embittered millions of citizens, deaths of larger-than-politics, radiant leaders — not only the shabby circus where shrill left-wing cliques attempt and fail to manufacture saints these days. The Baader-Meinhof Gang dead, big deal: aimless, vicious, overgrown brats playing with explosives and not caring who gets hurt as long as there's a big bang and it makes the front pages. Terrorism as an end in itself — who cares if they died by the same mindless violence they lived happily within?

Men like the Kennedys and Martin Luther King are covered well — but don't forget, this is wild young *Rolling Stone* and we've got brand new heroes all our own! It's sickening to see the scum that gets the same youth-vote thumbs-up as King and the Kennedys; Abbie Hoffman writes a 'tragic' obituary for Caryl Chessman, who was executed for preying on couples in parked cars, robbing them and forcing the women to have sex, in which the creep is presented as TOTALLY innocent — I just can't wait for Abbie's eulogy to Son Of Sam.

This, via Allen Ginsberg telling us that the Angels really *werent* as bad as the establishment makes out, leads on somehow to the sickening importance *Stone* attaches to rockanroll/youth/living outside of the "law" as the encapsulation everything good, healthy and rebellious about the '60s. Rock was in fact more of a means and catalyst for the crummy things that happened then than the great and noble; the cruel, freakish girls who lapped up Charlie Manson (a great rock fan himself) and slaughtered a helpless pregnant film star were much more likely to have spent their summers lolling in some festival mud than the fierce, beautiful anti-war girl photographed by Alan Copeland screaming brave hate at the police guarding Nixon's inauguration.

Young people would have protested against the war or racism without rock, like men marched from Jarrow or blacks rioted in Soweto. You didn't need to be a rock fan to protest, you needed to be angry at what was being done to people just because they were black or slit-eyed; and rock has never encouraged or directed anger, especially in America — it just sells it a record to play.

But there is a good case for buying this book, and that's the unspeakable photographs. Tear them out, stick them on your wall and learn them by heart and you'll never be fooled into thinking that the social change struggled for and won were courtesy of a vast youth conspiracy, fired and fed by some vacuous, vapid entertainment industry.

At least *Rolling Stone* will never be able to attempt the stage-management of any other decade's memories; this is the last honourhorrorand-heartbreakmadeeasyand-patented, that they'll be able to wring out of this world's history.

Julie Birchill

TROUBLE WITH THE LAW
(Pluto Press £1.25)

Subtitled *The Release Bust Book,* this is a cheap, handy and invaluable guide to the police and the law written in clear, straightforward language for people like you and me who need it most.

From arrest, through trial and possibly imprisonment, the guide tells you what your rights are and what the system can and cannot legally do. The distilled street wisdom of Release's existence over more than 10 years is here and, besides good advice, there are numerous addresses and reference sources.

As the book puts it, "If you are brought into contact with the system you will find that it is not invested with many of the wonderful virtues people hope for. But with this book you should at least be forewarned if not forearmed."

Dick Tracy

SNOWBLIND
By Robert Sabbag
(Picador £1.25)

MAMA COCA
By Antonil
(Hassle Free Press £3.95)

These two volumes are simply the best books currently available on cocaine and the plant from which it's derived.

Snowblind is a profile of an amazingly inventive cocaine smuggler named Zachary Swan, whose brief underworld career has rightly assumed legendary status. Beginning with a ludicrous seaside bust, we follow Swan's background and career as he establishes a Columbian-New York cocaine network of supreme ingenuity and beyond; eventually a diverting dilettante pursuit encounters the stark facts of hard crime.

Robert Sabbag's prose is sardonic and dense, combining the detailed eye of a New Journalist with the hip sensibility and humour of a latterday Damon Runyan. His breadth as a writer is remarkable. He can handle the hard facts of drug chemistry, the slang of a Colombian gangster, the intricacies of a complex drug run and the nebulous feelings produced by illegal substances with equal felicity.

Produced in a drama-documentary style, the book also contains a wealth of factual information on the chemical, legal and political realities of cocaine and, as such, is both a stimulating read and a valuable reference source.

Sabbag quotes Dr Andrew T Weil as saying: "If there is a cocaine problem, its essence is the confusion of the whole leaf with a single component isolated from it."

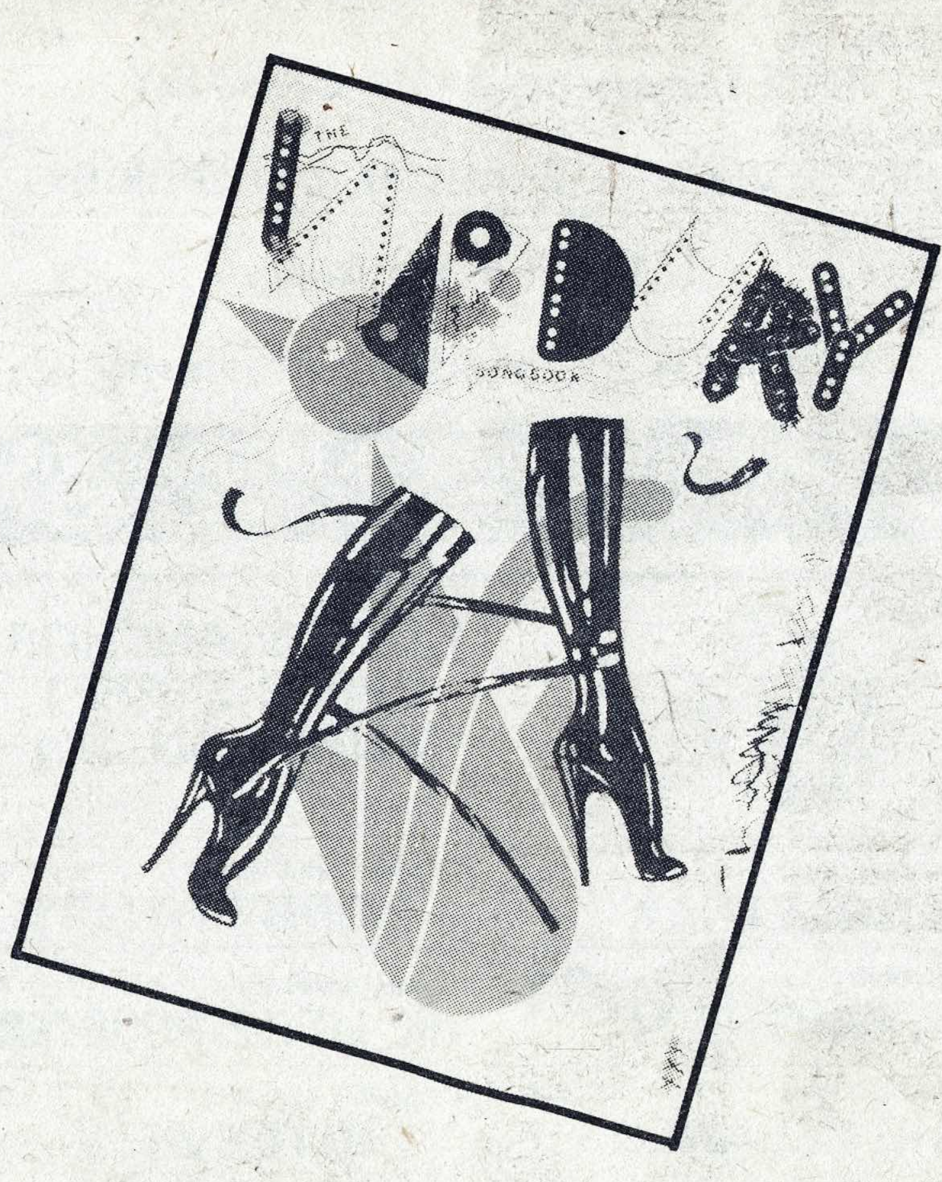
It is the coca leaf, which Weil dubs "green medicine", that forms the subject of *Mama Coca,* a highly unusual study of the plant, its mythology and the Indian culture that surrounds it and benefits from chewing its leaves.

Rejecting the academic approach favoured by most anthropologists, Antonil acutally went out and *lived* this study, chewing the coca leaf himself and becoming involved in the Indians' fight for independence.

His book is partly a record of this experience and partly an extremely detailed cultural history which, while perhaps too detailed for the general reader, ensures this book classic status as the best work on the subject since Mortimer's *Peru: A History of Coca.* Of particular interest is the excellent chapter on the politics of cocaine and coca, the best yet published.

Illustrated throughout with line drawings and photographs, *Mama Coca* stands, alongside *Snowblind,* as a seminal work. *(Mama Coca* is the first publication from a new press. In case of difficulty, copies may be obtained by post from HFP, BCM Box 311, London WC1, 6XX. Price £4.50 including postage).

Dick Tracy



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Neil Spencer

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LICENSED BARS – LIVE MUSIC – DANCING
8PM – 2 AM MONDAY TO SATURDAY
OVER 18s ONLY

ROCK WITH THE
CAROLINE Roadshow

APRIL
Thur 19 BASILDON, Raquels
Fri 20 COLCHESTER, Woods Sports Centre, Bergholt Road
Sat 21 STOWMARKET, Mid-Suffolk Sports Centre
Thur 26 BARKING F.C., Lodge Avenue, Barking
Fri 27 DUNSTABLE, Queensway Hall, Bernem Place
Sat 28 IPSWICH Gaumont. CAROLINE ROADSHOW ROCK CONCERT WITH LIVE BAND. Admission £2.00
Mon 30 BRENTWOOD, Hermit Club

MAY
Sat 5 HERTFORD, Castle Hall
Mon 7 BRAINTREE, The Institute
Sat 12 READING, Bulmers College of Higher Education, Woodland Avenue, Earley.
Fri 18 SOUTHEND, Football Club
Sat 19 CAMBRIDGE, Corn Exchange

★ *Lightshows supplied by Pulsar, Pluto, F.A.L., Zero 88 and Light Sound Studios. Lasers by Torial Electrical.*

GAFFA
+ MEDIUM MEDIUM
+ ART FAILURE
at the Acklam Hall
Portobello Road
Thursday April 19th
Doors open 8 pm
Tickets 90p in advance from Rough Trade, Honky Tonk & Small Wonder, or £1.20 on the door

A.J's CLUB
High Street, Lincoln
Tel. 30874
Friday April 20th at 8pm
DOLL BY DOLL

FRIDAY 20TH APRIL
THE JERKS
+ XPELAIRS
LEEDS POLYTECHNIC

THE BRIDGE HOUSE
23 BARKING ROAD, CANNING TOWN, E16

Thursday, April 19th 40p
REBEL
(Current single Rocka Shocka on Bridge House Records)
+ Dutch Boys

Friday, April 20th 50p
WARM JETS
+ SUPPORT

Saturday, April 21st 50p
BLUES SESSION
featuring The PAUL JONES
DAVE KELLY
TOM McGUINNES
HUGH FLINT
+ Friends

Sunday, April 22nd 40p
REMUS DOWN BOULEVARD
+ Support

Monday, April 23rd Free
64 SPOONS
+ Siren

Tuesday, April 24th Free
THE DIRECTORS
+ V.I.P.s

Wednesday, April 25th Free
DEL BROMHAM
(EX-STRAY)

HARVEY GOLDSMITH ENTERTAINMENTS PRESENTS
RENNAISANCE
+ SUPPORT
HAMMERSMITH ODEON
FRIDAY 11th MAY at 8pm
Tickets £3.75, £3.25, £2.75
Advance Box Office, Odeon Theatre, Queen Caroline St., W6. Tel. 01-748 4081. Harvey Goldsmith Box Office at Chappell's, 50 New Bond St., London, W1. Tel. 01-629 3453.

DUKE OF LANCASTER
Approach Road, NEW BARNET (beside BR New Barnet)

Thursday, April 19th
BACKLASH
Friday, April 20th
DAVID BLOSSE BAND
Saturday, April 21st
JERRY THE FERRET
Sunday, April 22nd
SUCKER
Tuesday, April 24th
THE UNEXPLAINED

WINDSOR CASTLE
309 Harrow Road, W9
(Nearest tube — Westbourne Park)

Mon 23 April
PIRANHAS
Tues 24 April
SMIRKS
Weds 25 April
CROOKS
Thurs 26 April
THE VEINS
+ New Town Neurotics
Fri 27 April
THE WALL
+ The Dials
Sat 28 April
NOBODYZ
+ The Vye
Sun 29 April
ROBERT & THE REMOULDS + support

The Accelerators
Dingwalls
Saturday April 28th
0 5 1
7 2 8
7 6 3 9
Ask for Kathy

THE Venue
160 VICTORIA ST, SW1
(opp Victoria Tube station)
01-834 5500
Doors open 6pm

Friday April 20th £3.00
PLAYERS ASSOCIATION
9.00

Saturday April 21st £3.00
ANDREA TRUE CONNECTION
8.30 & 12

Sunday April 22nd £3.00
SUPERCHARGE
9.00

Tuesday April 24th £3.00
GERRY AND THE PACEMAKERS
9.00

Thursday April 26th & Friday April 27th £3.00
ROGER CHAPMAN & THE SHORT LIST
8.30

Saturday April 28th £3.00
BETHNAL
9.00

ROCK AGAINST SEXISM
TOUR DE FORCE
AND
BELT & BRACES
WOOLWICH TRAMSHED, Woolwich New Rd., S.E.18
Tuesday April 24th Admission £1.

Attrix Records
the PIRANHAS
debut single RB/04/SUE
JILLY b/w COLOURED MUSIC
from all sensible record shops

CATCH THEM AT THE MOONLIGHT, HAMPSTEAD
WEDNESDAY APRIL 18th

NATIONWIDE GIG GUIDE

Thursday

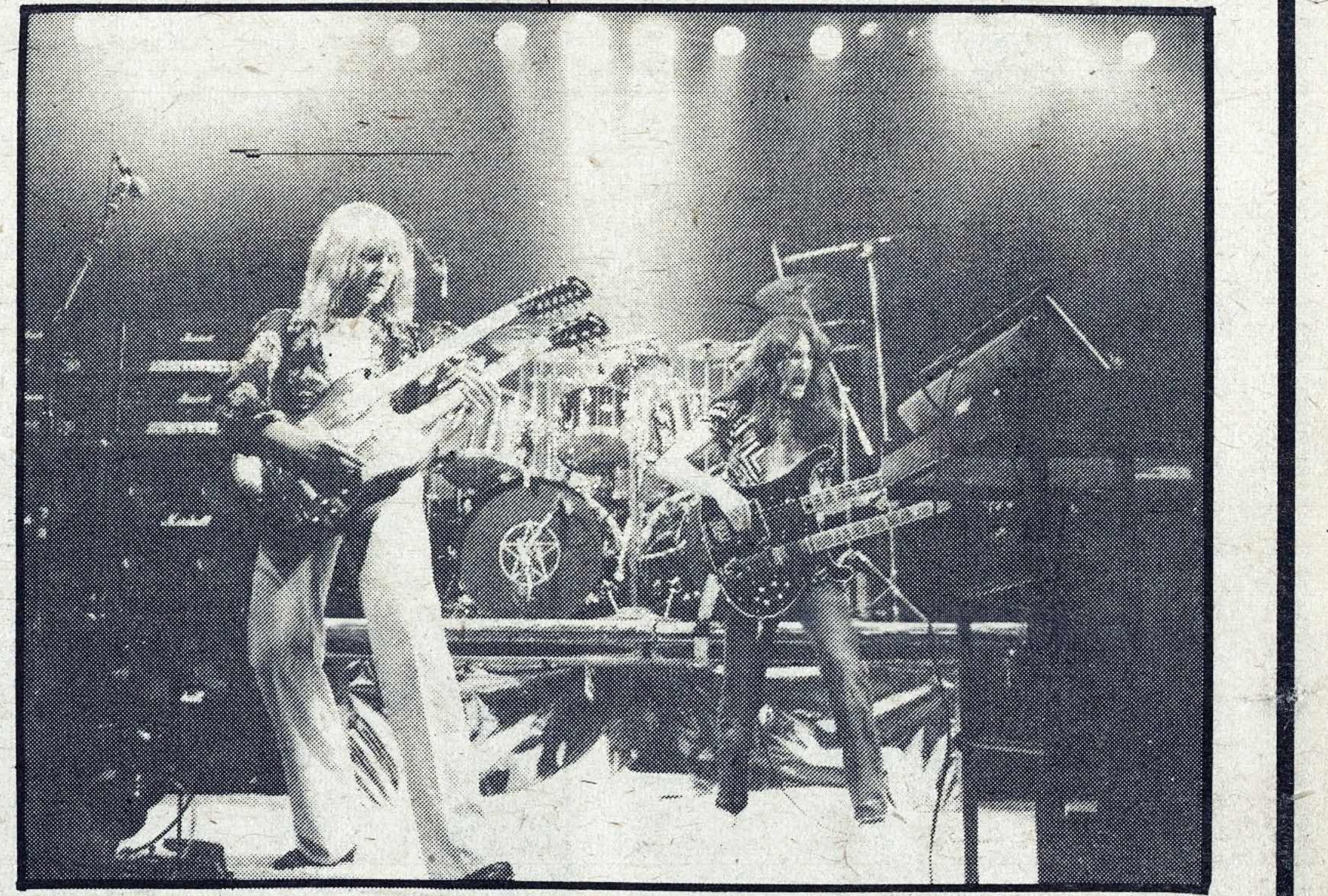
Ampthill Folk Club: **Brandywine Bridge**
Bedford Kempston Youth Centre: **Spring Offensive**
Birmingham Barbarella's: **Toyah**
Birmingham Mercat Cross: **The Clinic**
Birmingham Railway Hotel: **Orphan**
Birmingham The Bell: **The Clerks**
Birmingham The Haven: **Reno**
Bradford St. George's Hall: **Thin Lizzy / The Vipers**
Burntwood Troubador: **Strider**
Chester Arts Centre: **Lew Lewis Reformer**
Chesterfield Fusion Club: **Doll By Doll**
Congleton Duke of Wellington: **Lies All Lies**
Cork Arcadia Ballroom: **Frankie Miller's Full House**
Coventry City Centre: **The Bumpers**
Coventry Lanchester Polytechnic: **Tot & The Girls In Room 419**
Coventry Theatre: **Billy Connolly**
Derby Assembly Rooms: **Elton John**
Glasgow Apollo Centre: **The Three Degrees**
Halesowen Tiffany's: **Killer**
Harrow The Havelock: **The Chevrons**
High Wycombe Nags Head: **The V.I.P.'s**
Hucknall Welfare Club: **Vesuvius**
Ipswich Running Buck: **Gypp**
Johnstone Cochrane House: **Underhand Jones**
Leicester De Montfort Hall: **Magazine**
Liverpool Eric's: **XTC**
London Camden Dingwalls: **S.V.T. featuring Jack Casady**
London Camden Music Machine: **Militant Barry**
London Covent Garden Rock Garden: **Fischer-Z**
London Drury Lane Theatre Royal: **Dusty Springfield**
London Fulham Golden Lion: **Paris**
London Hammersmith Odeon: **Players Association / Light of the World**
London Harlesden Tavistock Hall: **Prince Far I / Bim Sherman / Prince Hammer / Creation Rebel**
London Harrow Rd. Windsor Castle: **The Soul Boys / The Millionaires**
London Islington Hope & Anchor: **Angletrax**
London Kennington The Cricketers: **Manyana**
London Kensington De Villiers Bar: **Gold Dust Twins**
London Knightsbridge Pizza on the Park: **Martin Taylor & Ike Isaacs**
London Maunkberry's: **Viola Wills**
London Palladium: **Kate Bush**
London Royal Albert Hall: **James Last Orchestra**
London Soho Pizza Express: **Al Grey / Tony Coe**
London Southgate Royalty Ballroom: **'Wild Man' Tony Conn**
London St. Moritz Club: **Red Tape**
London Stoke Newington Pegasus: **The Books / The Agents**
London Tottenham The Spurs: **Zilch**
London Wimbledon Tennessee Country Club: **Matchbox**
London Woolwich Tramshed: **George Melly & The Feetwarmers**
London W.14 The Kensington: **Fast Livin'**
London W.10 Acklam Hall: **Medium Medium**
Manchester Apollo Theatre: **Planxty**
Manchester Middleton Civic Hall: **Gonzalez**
Milborne Port Taps: **Martian Schoolgirls**
Newcastle Quayside Redhouse: **American Echoes**
Nottingham Hearty Good Fellow: **The Hormones**
Nottingham Imperial Hotel: **Lap Region**
Nottingham The Bodega: **Art Failure**
Poole Empire Hall: **Tours**
Porthcawl Stoneleigh Club: **Freddy Cole (for three days)**
Portsmouth Cumberland Tavern: **Interference**
Port Talbot Troubadour: **The Damned**
Poynton Folk Centre: **Ann Lennox-Martin & Sam Stevens**
Sheffield Limit Club: **The Members**
Southampton Gaumont Theatre: **Marty Robbins**
Southampton Joiners Arms: **The Dials**
Southport Riverside Centre: **The Accelerators**
St. Helens Glassbridge Hotel: **J. G. Spoils**
Stockport Country Club: **Spookey (for three days)**
Willenhall The Cavalcade: **Ocean Boulevard**
Windsor Blazers: **The Drifters**
Wolverhampton Civic Hall: **John Miles / Bandit**

Friday

Ayr Darlington Hotel: **High Flames**
Bath Pavilion: **John Otway Band**
Birmingham Barrel Organ: **Bright Eyes**
Birmingham Digbeth Civic Hall: **Jean Jacques Burnel**
Birmingham Elizabethan Days: **Bad Earth**
Birmingham Odeon: **Planxty**
Birmingham Railway Hotel: **Spitfire**
Birmingham (Small Heath) The Sydenham: **The Crack**
Birmingham Vauxhall Social Club: **Yakety Yak**
Bishops Stortford Triad Leisure Centre: **Revelation Rockers**
Blandford Corn Exchange: **Martian Schoolgirls**
Bridlington Spa Pavilion: **Thin Lizzy / The Vipers**
Cambridge Corn Exchange: **The Members**
Cambridge Polytechnic: **Tot & The Girls In Room 419**
Corby Raven Hall: **Medium Medium**
Coventry Ryton Bridge: **Streetlite**
Cromer West Runton Pavilion: **Toyah**
Derby Sinfin Moor Club: **Strange Days**
Dublin Stardust Club: **Frankie Miller's Full House**
Dudley J.B.'s Club: **Samson**
Dunfermline Northern Roadhouse: **Underhand Jones**
Edinburgh Clouds: **Magazine**
Framlingham Assembly Hall: **Writz**
Guildford Royal Hotel: **The Piranhas**
Hanley Victoria Hall: **Penetration / Radio Stars**
High Wycombe Town Hall: **Bim Sherman / Creation Rebel**
Hitchin College: **Gilt Edge**
Ipswich The Kingfisher: **Gypp**
Keele University: **Armpit Jug Band**
Kettering Windmill Club: **The Bearshank Band**
Kirkcaldy Dutch Mill: **The Buzzards**
Knaresborough Folk Club: **Packie Byrne & Bonnie Shaljean**
Leeds Viva Wine Bar: **Red Light Cruisers**
Lincoln A.J.'s Club: **Doll By Doll**
Liverpool Eric's: **The B52's**
London Acton Kings Head: **Paz**
London Acton Windmill: **Sad Among Strangers**
London Bloomsbury Logan Hall Theatre: **Al Al Grey / Tony Coe / London Jazz Big Band / Harry Gold Band / Larry Adler**
London Brixton Canterbury Arms: **Balloons**
London Camden Dublin Castle: **ABC**
London Camden Music Machine: **Supercharge**
London Camden Southampton Arms: **Jellyroll Blues Band**
London Covent Garden Rock Garden: **Carol Grimes Band**
London Drury Lane Theatre Royal: **Dusty Springfield**
London East Ham Ruskin Arms: **Dog Watch**
London Fulham Golden Lion: **Jackie Lynton's Happy Days**
London Hammersmith Odeon: **John Miles / Bandit**
London Harrow Rd Windsor Castle: **The Warm Jets / La Staza**
London Kensington The Nashville: **Punishment Of Luxury**
London Lewisham Black Bull: **Rock Island Line**
London Marquee Club: **S.V.T. featuring Jack Casady**
London Notting Hill Old Swan: **Zilch**
London Palladium: **Kate Bush**
London Putney Star & Garter: **Greig & Nigel's Folk and Blues Night**
London Rainbow Theatre: **Mothers Finest**
London Soho Pizza Express: **Deanery Quartet**
London Stoke Newington Pegasus: **The Crooks / Sussex**
London Waterloo Action Committee: **Skin Deep**
London West Hampstead Moonlight Club: **Rok A.G.**
London Willesden White Horse: **Little Tony & The Tennessee Rebels**
Maidenhead Leisure Centre: **Light Of The World**
Manchester Middleton Civic Hall: **The Passage**
Manchester Russell Club: **Iggy Pop**
Middlesbrough Rock Garden: **Lew Lewis Reformer**
Newport The Village: **Gonzalez**
Nottingham Hearty Good Fellow: **Last Call/Units**
Nottingham Sandpiper: **Girls School**
Poole Arts Centre: **Neil Sedaka**
Poole Brewers Arms: **Interference**
Preston Gatsby's: **Dave Berry & The Cruisers**
Rowley Regis Four Ways: **Ocean Boulevard**
Sheffield Top Rank: **Black Slate**
Sherbourne St. John Cob & Pen: **Richard Digance**
Southend Top Alex: **Sta-Prest**
St. Albans Horn Of Plenty: **Scandal**
Swansea Haford Inn: **White Heat**
Tamworth Assembly Rooms: **George Melly & The Feetwarmers**
Uxbridge Unit One: **The Chevrons**
Watford Red Lion: **Disco Students**
Windsor Blazers: **The Drifters**
Wolverhampton Lafayette: **The Skids**
Worthing The Balmoral: **The Tinsels**
York Barge Club: **Defunked**

Saturday

Aberdeen Capitol Theatre: **The Three Degrees**
Aberdeen University: **Magazine**
Baldock The Victoria: **Quasar**
Bath Brillig Arts Centre: **The Soft Boys**
Birmingham Barrel Organ: **Reno**
Birmingham Hippodrome: **Elton John**
Birmingham (Kings Heath) Hare & Hounds: **Mad Jocks & Englishmen**
Birmingham Mercat Cross: **Strider**
Birmingham Railway Hotel: **Mean Street Dealers**
Bishops Stortford Triad Leisure Centre: **Teen Beats**
Blackburn Sett End Inn: **Dave Berry & The Cruisers**
Blackpool Norbreck Castle: **The Accelerators**
Blyth Golden Eagle: **Southbound**
Bournmouth Winter Gardens: **James Last Orchestra**
Brighton Conference Centre: **Neil Sedaka**
Brighton Dome: **Jean Jacques Burnel**
Brighton The Vault: **The Chefs**
Bristol Crown Cellar Bar: **The Wild Beasts**
Burntwood Troubadour: **Ocean Boulevard**
Carshalton St. Helier Arms: **Johnny Storm/Memphis**
Cheltenham Whitcombe Lodge: **The Damned**
Cromer West Runton Pavilion: **Raymond Froggatt**
Dublin University College: **XTC**
Dudley J.B.'s Club: **The Members**
Dunstable California Ballroom: **Players Association**
Eastbourne Congress Theatre: **John Miles/Bandit**
Eastbourne Kings Country Club: **The Drifters**
Folkestone Leas Cliff Hall: **Supercharge**
Glasgow Burns Howff: **The Buzzards**
Goole Station Hotel: **Snoots**
Gosport John Peel: **Shakedown**
Gt. Yarmouth Caister Holiday Centre: **Light Of The World**
Hamilton The Accies Club: **Underhand Jones**
Haverfordwest Masonic Hall: **Delegation**
Haverfordwest RAF Bawdy: **Matchbox**
Inverness Muirtown Motel: **The Scottish Monos**
Ipswich Gaumont Theatre: **Planxty**
Ipswich The Alma: **Gypp**
Ipswich Tracey's: **Gonzalez**
Leeds Packhorse: **Richard Digance**
Leeds Staging Post: **Vesuvius**
Leicester University: **Wayne County & The Electric Chairs**
Lincoln Ley's Sports Club: **Strange Days**
Liverpool Eric's: **Iggy Pop**
London Camden Music Machine: **Toyah**
London Camden Fairfield Play Centre: **Scritti Politti**
London Covent Garden Rock Garden: **Bob Kerr's Whoopee Band**
London Drury Lane Theatre Royal: **Dusty Springfield**
London Enfield Hop Poles: **Scandal**
London Fulham Golden Lion: **Ricky Cool & The Icebergs**
London Hammersmith The Swan: **First Aid**
London Harrow Rd. Windsor Castle: **Neo/The Satellites**
London Kensington The Nashville: **Punishment Of Luxury**
London Lewisham Black Bull: **Storm Force**
London Paddington Western Counties: **Too Much**
London Palladium: **Tom Waits**
London Plumstead Green Man: **Sad Among Strangers**
London Royal Festival Hall: **Mike Oldfield**
London Soho Pizza Express: **Al Grey/Tony Coe**
London Southall Hamboro' Tavern: **The Chevrons**
London Stoke Newington Pegasus: **Big Chief**



RUSH arrive at the weekend for their extensive UK tour, already practically sold out. Despite their lack of hits here, the Canadian band have a huge following in Britain, so tickets will be at a premium at Newcastle (Monday and Tuesday) and Glasgow (Wednesday).

London The Mall I.C.A.: **George Melly & The Feetwarmers**
London Tottenham Club Noriek: **Prince Far I/Bim Sherman/Prince Hammer/Creation Rebel**
London Victoria The Venue: **Andrea True Connection**
London Waterloo National Theatre Foyer: **Brian Leake Trio**
London West Hampstead Moonlight Club: **The Nips/The Mirrors**
Manchester The Factory: **John Otway Band**
Manchester The Squat: **The Passage**
Middlesbrough Rock Garden: **Penetration**
Nottingham Boat Club: **Magic**
Nottingham Hearty Good Fellow: **Outward Band**
Nottingham Sandpiper: **The Records/Bitch**
Nuneaton 101 Club: **Boy Bastin**
Portrush Arcadia: **Frankie Miller's Full House**
Retford Porterhouse: **Lew Lewis Reformer**
Rotherham Arts Centre: **Eyes At Risk/Pagan Bo/The Prams/Subliminal Cuts**
Stevenage The Swan: **Spring Offensive**
Stratford-on-Avon Ettington Park: **The Clinic**
Tonypandy Naval Club: **Quartz**
Watford Mex's Palace: **The Notion**
Wishaw Crown Hotel (lunchtime): **The Pests**

Sunday

Bakewell Monsal Head: **Lies All Lies**
Belfast Queen's University: **XTC**
Birmingham Barbarella's: **Orphan**
Birmingham Hippodrome: **Elton John**
Birmingham Railway Hotel: **Prima Donna**
Birmingham Shirley Red Lion: **The Crack**
Bishops Stortford Triad Leisure Centre: **Tracks (lunchtime)/Derek Winter Group (evening)**
Blackpool Opera House: **James Last Orchestra**
Bournemouth Winter Gardens: **Billy Connolly**
Bradford Princeville Hotel: **Whitefire**
Brighton Alhambra: **The Piranhas**
Bristol Locarno: **Jean Jacques Burnel**
Bromley The Northover (lunchtime): **Bill Scott & Ian Ellis**
Cardiff Troubadour: **Freddy Cole**
Croydon Greyhound: **The Damned/The Ruts**
Derby Old Bell Hotel: **Vesuvius**
Edinburgh Usher Hall: **The Three Degrees**
Fife St. Andrew's University: **Magazine**
Gravesend Woodville Hall: **Light Of The World**
Harrogate Majestic Hotel: **Gerry & The Pacemakers**
Hartlepool The Nursery: **Mike Absalom**
Hitchin Talisman Club: **Richard Digance**
Ipswich Arts Theatre: **Gypp**
Jacksdale Grey Topper: **The Members**
Leeds Grand Theatre: **Planxty**
Leeds Staging Post: **Snoots**
Leeds Victoria Hotel (lunchtime): **Best Friends**
Liverpool Empire Theatre: **Marty Robbins**
London Acton Kings Head: **Strange Fruit**
London Battersea Nags Head: **Jugular Vein**
London Camden Brecknock: **The Small Hours**
London Camden Dingwalls: **Lew Lewis Reformer**
London Canning Town Bridge House: **Remus Down Boulevard**
London Charing Cross Duke of Buckingham: **The Invisibles (for four days)**
London Charing -X Rd. Astoria Theatre: **"Oh Boy!" with Alvin Stardust/Joe Brown/Les Gray/Shakin' Stevens/Freddie 'Fingers' Lee/Fumble etc.**
London Chiswick John Bull: **The Little Jimmies**
London Clapham Two Brewers: **The V.I.P.'s**
London Covent Garden Rock Garden: **The Psychedelic Furs**
London Drury Lane Theatre Royal: **Vangelis**
London East Ham Ruskin Arms: **Dog Watch**
London Finchley Torrington : **Les Kosmin with Soulyard**
London Fulham Golden Lion: **Little Acre**
London Hammersmith Odeon: **Thin Lizzy/The Vipers**
London Harrow Rd. Windsor Castle: **Spare Parts**
London Kensington The Nashville: **S.V.T. featuring Jack Casady**
London Palladium: **Neil Sedaka (for a week)**
London Peckham Montpelier (lunchtime): **Blue Moon**
London Plumstead Green Man: **The Chords**
London Royal Albert Hall: **Shirley Bassey**
London S.E.1 Duke of Clarence (lunchtime): **Belt and Braces Band**
London Soho Pizza Express: **Keith Sawbridge**
London Stoke Newington Pegasus: **Tennis Shoes**
London W1 Portman Hotel (lunchtime): **Dick Charlesworth Band**
Luton The Cotters: **Disco Students**
Middlesbrough Rock Garden: **Penetration**
Newark Balderton Club: **Strange Days**
Newbridge Naval Club: **Strangeways**
Newcastle Quayside Redhouse: **Hot Snax**
Newquay Central Hotel: **The Winners**
Nottingham Hearty Good Fellow: **Medium Medium**
Portsmouth Rotary Club: **Interference**
Poynton Folk Centre: **Tony Capstick-/Fayrfax**
Sheffield Top Rank: **Iggy Pop**
Stratford-on-Avon Ettington Park: **Mean Street Dealers**
Trowbridge The Capricorn: **Gonzalez**
Walsall Dirty Duck (lunchtime): **The Amazing Dark Horse**

Monday

Andover Country Bumpkin: **Souled Out**
Belfast Ulster Hall: **Frankie Miller's Full House**
Birmingham Barrel Organ: **Freebird**
Birmingham Mercat Cross: **Orphan**
Birmingham Nite Out: **The Drifters (for a week)**
Birmingham Odeon: **John Miles / Bandit**
Birmingham Railway Hotel: **Video**
Bishops Stortford Triad Leisure Centre: **Honest John**
Brighton Dome: **The Three Degrees**
Bristol Crown Cellar Bar: **The Combo**
Canterbury Odeon: **Jean Jacques Burnel**
Dublin TV Club: **XTC**
Exeter Routes: **Gonzalez**
Halesowen Tiffany's: **John Otway Band**
Ilford Cauliflower Hotel: **Original East Side Stompers**
Kelty The Oakfield: **The Buzzards**
Kingston Noise Factory: **Little Bo Bitch**
Lincoln Polytechnic: **Tot & The Girls In Room 419**
Liverpool Eric's: **Supercharge**
Liverpool The Crown: **The Clerks**
London Camden Dingwalls: **Glaxo Babies**
London Canning Town Bridge House: **64 Spoons / Siren**
London Covent Garden Rock Garden: **The Hollywood Killers / Robert & The Remoulds**
London Drury Lane Theatre Royal: **Pheobe Snow**
London Fulham Golden Lion: **Bob Kerr's Whoopee Band**
London Hammersmith Odeon: **Thin Lizzy / The Vipers**
London Harrow Rd., Windsor Castle: **Rubber Johnny**
London Kensington The Nashville: **Interview**
London Marquee Club: **The Extras**
London Notting Hill Chepstow Arms: **Paul South**
London N. 4 The Stapleton: **The O.K. Band**
London Old Brompton Rd. Troubadour: **Ferencz Asman**
London Putney Half Moon: **Jeremy Taylor**
London Putney Star & Garter: **Penny Royal**
London Stoke Newington Pegasus: **Tot & The Girls In Room 419 / X Films**
London W.1 Portman Hotel: **Midnite Follies Orchestra**
Middlesbrough Madisons: **Players Association**
Middlesborough Teesside Polytechnic: **Mike Absalom**
Milton Keynes Crawford Arms: **Fischer-Z**
Newcastle City Hall: **Rush**
Newcastle The Cooperage: **Sabrejets**
Nottingham Hearty Good Fellow: **The Party**
Nottingham Imperial Hotel: **Gwaihir**
Oldham Queen Elizabeth Hall: **Spookey**
Preston Guildhall: **James Last Orchestra**
Rayleigh Crocs: **'Wild Man' Tony Conn**
Sevenoaks (Badgers Mount) Black Eagle: **Matchbox**
Southampton Gaumont Theatre: **Billy Connolly**
St. Albans Horn of Plenty: **Scandal**
Stoke Jollees: **The Stylistics (for a week)**
Trowbridge Lamb Inn: **Richard Digance**
York Arts Centre: **Dunlin**
York Barge Club: **Middle Distance**

Tuesday

Birmingham Barbarella's: **The Members**
Birmingham Fighting Cocks: **Brujo**
Birmingham Mercat Cross: **Killer**
Birmingham Railway Hotel: **Speed Limit**
Bishops Stortford Triad Leisure Centre: **The Vye**
Bridlington Queen's Hotel: **Mike Absalom**
Brighton Alhambra: **Better Looking / Twist And Shout**
Brighton Richmond Hotel: **The Piranhas**
Bristol Locarno: **John Otway Band**

CONTINUES OVER . . .

IGGY POP, always a welcome visitor to these shores, begins another round-Britain jaunt at Manchester (Friday), Liverpool (Saturday), Sheffield (Sunday) and London Camden (Wednesday).

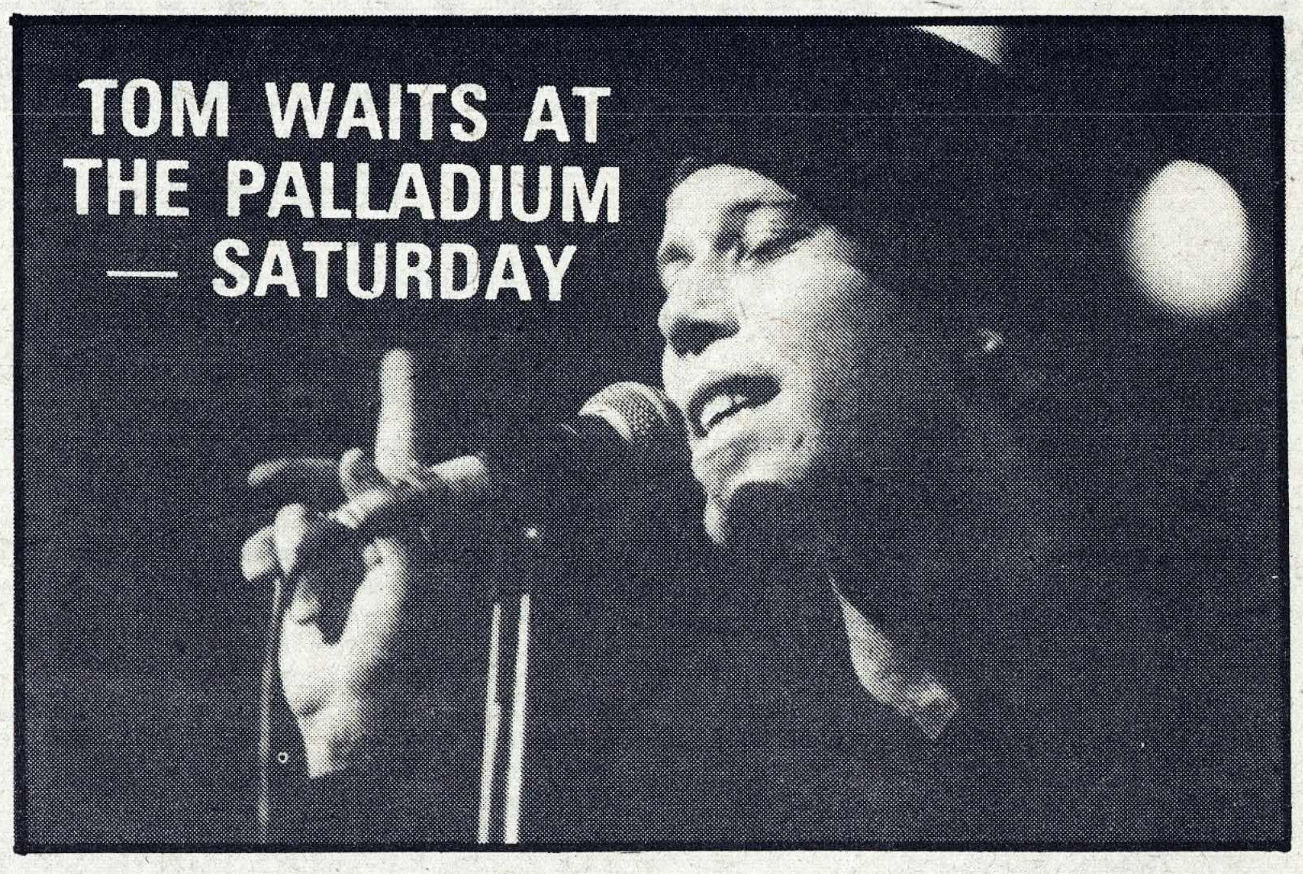
MORE GIG GUIDE

COMPILED BY DEREK JOHNSON

Bristol Top Rank: **Penetration/Radio Stars**
East Grinstead Clouds: **Shakedown**
Galway University: **XTC**
Glasgow Kelvin Hall: **James Last Orchestra**
Glasgow The Amphora: **Underhand Jones**
Ipswich Gaumont Theatre: **Thin Lizzy/The Vipers**
London Camden Music Machine: **The Special A.K.A./The Red Lights**
London Covent Garden Rock Garden: **Dangerous Rhythms**
London Drury Lane Theatre Royal: **Memphis Slim and 'The Roots of Rock 'n' Roll'**
London Fulham Golden Lion: **Skin Deep**
London Harrow Rd. Windsor Castle: **One Eyed Jacks**
London Marquee Club: **Giants/Sneeky Pete**
London Maunkberry's: **Lizzie**
London Middlesex Polytechnic: **Robert & The Remoulds**
London N.4 The Stapleton: Brett Marvin & The Thunderbolts
London Soho Pizza Express: **Eddie Thompson & Kaye Garner**
London Stoke Newington Pegasus: **The Resisters/Scandal**
London West Hampstead Moonlight Club: **The Soft Boys/La Starza**
London W.10 Acklam Hall: **Prince Far I/Bim Sherman/Prince Hammer/Creation Rebel**
Manchester Apollo Theatre: **Elton John**
Manchester Band on the Wall: **The Tunes/The Vibrant Thigh/Rare Device**
Newcastle City Hall: **Rush**
Newcastle Madison's: **Players Association**
Norwich Scamps: **Boy Bastin**
Oldham Romeo & Juliet: **Edwin Starr**
Plymouth Fiesta Suite: **Gonzalez**
Portsmouth Locarno: **Jean-Jacques Burnel**
Sheffield City Hall: **John Miles/Bandit**
St Albans Horn of Plenty: **The O.K. Band**
Walsall Dirty Duck: **The Amazing Dark Horse**
Washington Stella Maris Club: **Billy Armstrong/American Echoes**
York Barge Club: **The Forresters**
York Pop Club: **Tot & The Girls In Room 419**

JOHN OTWAY goes out on the rounds again, heading a major tour which kicks off in Bath (Friday), Manchester (Saturday), Halesowen (Monday), Bristol (Tuesday) and Plymouth (Wednesday).

MIKE OLDFIELD begins a short series of rare stage appearances, backed by a 45-piece orchestra and choir, with London concerts at the Festival Hall (Saturday) and Wembley (Wednesday).



TOM WAITS AT THE PALLADIUM — SATURDAY

Wednesday

Belfast Hillhead Youth Club: **PA / Flicknife / LSD**
Birkenhead Hamilton Club: **Gonzalez**
Birmingham Barrel Organ: **Brujo**
Birmingham Bogarts: **Jameson Raid**
Birmingham Railway Hotel: **Rainmaker**
Birmingham The Haven: **Mean Street Dealers**
Birmingham (Yardley) Bulls Head: **Roses**
Bishops Stortford Triad Leisure Centre: **Hi Flying Clive**
Bradford St George's Hall: **John Miles / Bandit**
Brighton Alhambra: **The Little Jimmies**
Caerphilly Double Diamond: **The Dooleys (for four days)**
Cardiff Top Rank: **Penetration / Radio Stars**
Carshalton St Helier Arms: **Freddie 'Fingers' Lee / Hound Dog**
Cheltenham Plough Inn: **Roadsters**
Dewsbury The Entertainer: **Gerry & The Pacemakers**
East Grinstead Clouds: **Shakedown**
Edinburgh Usher Hall: **James Last Orchestra**
Glasgow Apollo Centre: **Rush**
Greenock Town Hall: **Child**
Gt Yarmouth Wheels: **Boy Bastin**
Hayes Alfred Beck Centre: **The Spnners**
Hemel Hempstead Pavilion: **Jean Jacques Burnel**
Leeds Fan Club: **Tot & The Girls In Room 419**
Leeds Marquis of Granby: **25 Rifles**
Leeds Scott Hall Hotel: **Lies All Lies**
Leeds University: **Mike Absalom**
Liverpool University: **Frankie Miller's Full House / Flicks**
London Camden Music Machine: **Iggy Pop**
London Covent Garden Rock Garden: **'Wild Man' Tony Conn**
London Fulham Golden Lion: **Bowles Brothers Band**
London Harrow Rd Windsor Castle: **The Crooks**
London Islington Hope & Anchor: **Interview**
London Knightsbridge The Grove: **Free Beer**
London Marquee Club: **Black Slate**
London Maunkberry's: **Dana Gillespie**
London Soho Pizza Express: **Brian Leak Quartet**
London Southall White Hart: **Little Tony & The Tennessee Rebels**
London Stoke Newington Pegasus: **Agony Column / The Vapors**
London Wembley Conference Centre: **Mike Oldfield**
London West Hampstead Moonlight Club: **Bobby Henry / P F Release**
London Wimbledon FC Nelson's Club: **ABC**
London Wimbledon Tennessee Country Club: **Yakety Yak**
Manchester Apollo Theatre: **Elton John**
Manchester The Factory: **Swell Maps / Fire Place**
Manchester Bowden Vale Club: **Exodus / Distractions / Private Sector**
Newcastle City Hall: **Magazine**
Newport Stowaway Club: **The Members**
Nottingham Hearty Good Fellow: **Gwaihir**
Oldham Romeo & Juliet: **Edwin Starr**
Plymouth Woods Centre: **John Otway Band**
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THE CROOKS + SUSSEX
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Featuring Dick Heckstall-Smith
Sunday April 22nd 50p
TENNIS SHOES
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TOT & THE GIRLS + X-FILMS
Tuesday April 24th 50p
THE RESISTERS + SCANDAL
Wednesday April 25th Free
AGONY COLUMN + THE VAPOURS

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April 19th
HAVELOCK, HARROW
April 20th
UNIT ONE, UXBRIDGE
April 21st
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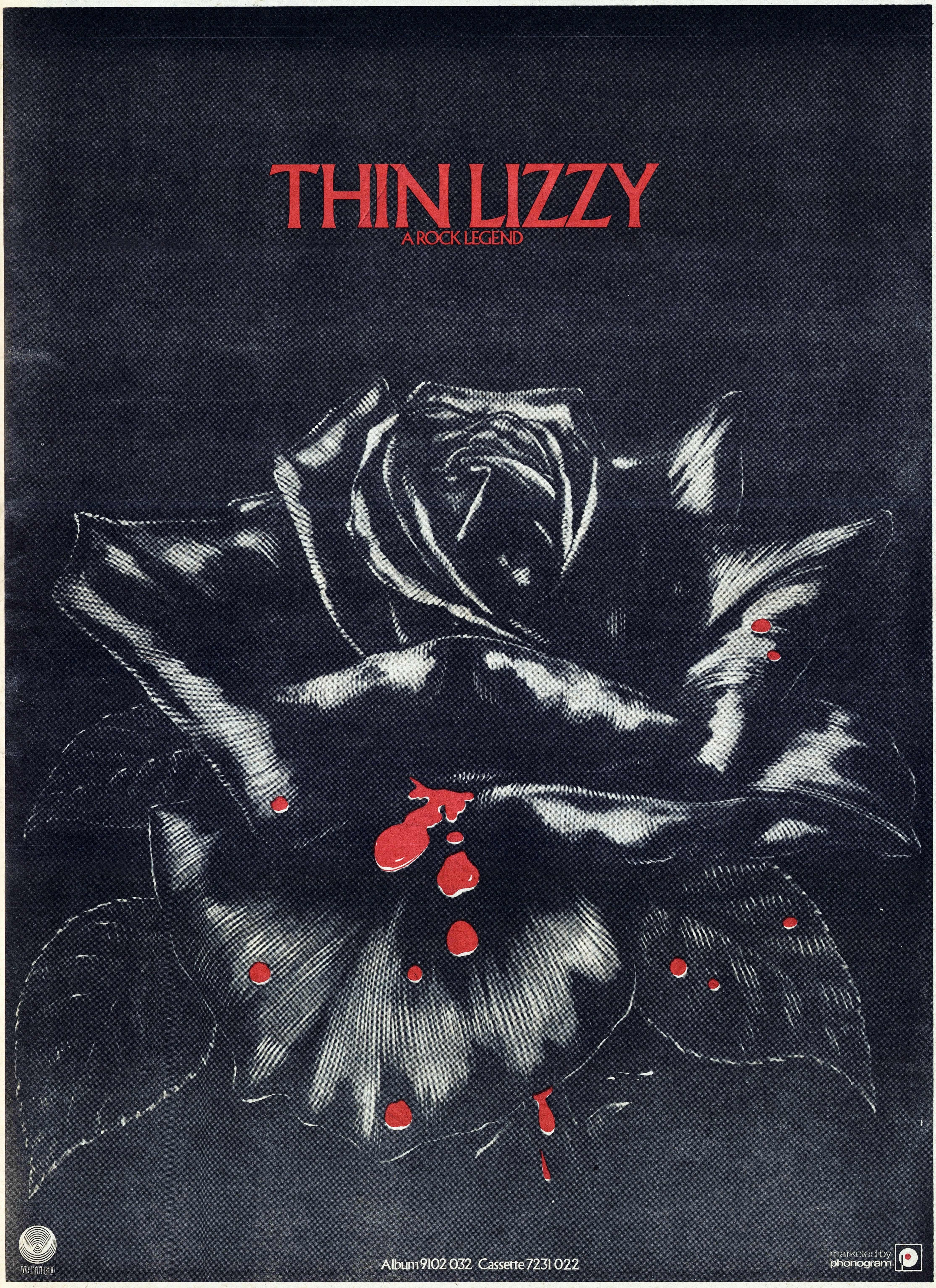
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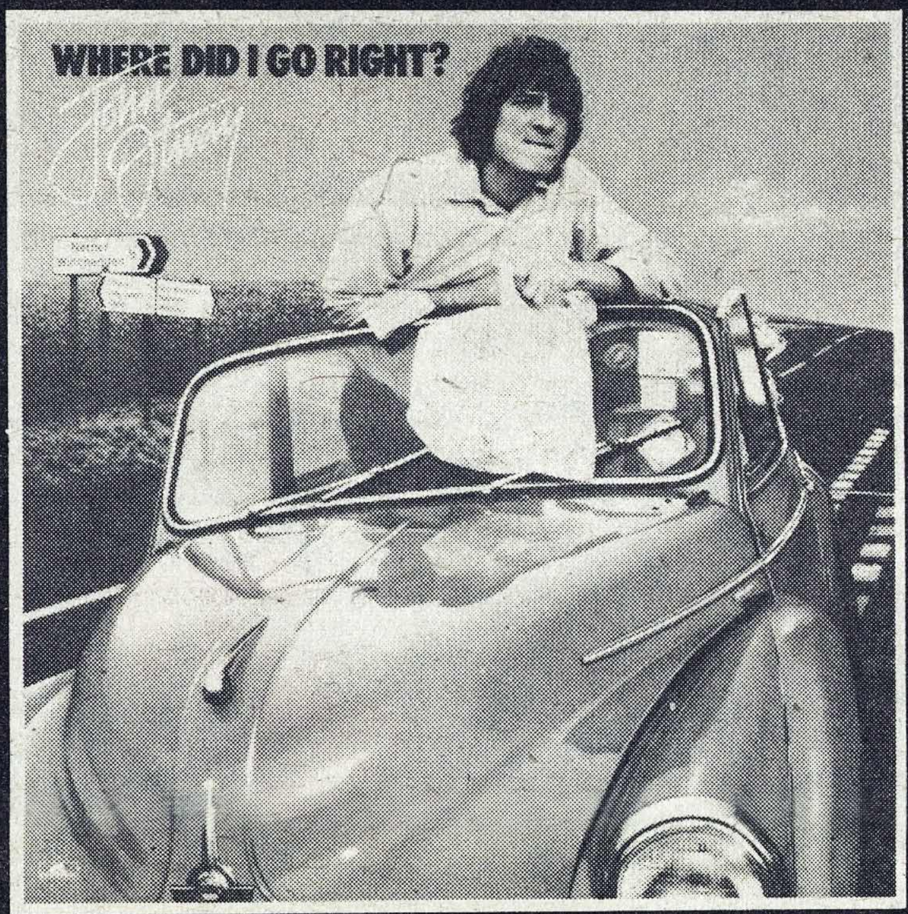

WHERE DID I GO RIGHT?

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INTRODUCING The Headboys

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April 25th PLYMOUTH Woods
April 26th EXETER Routes
April 27th HATFIELD Bulls Pk. Coll.
April 28th AYLESBURY Friars
May 1st NORWICH Boogie House
May 2nd CAMBRIDGE Corn Exchange
May 3rd BIRMINGHAM Barbarella's
May 4th SLOUGH Langley College
May 5th LEICESTER University
May 6th GUILDFORD Civic Hall
May 7th WEST RUNTON Pavilion
May 8th LEEDS Fan Club
May 9th SHEFFIELD Sheffield Poly
May 10th NOTTINGHAM Sandpiper
May 11th LIVERPOOL Eric's
May 12th LONDON Rainbow

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ON THE TOWN

The Avatar Of Decay Dies With The Dead

Lou Reed
Hammersmith Odeon

Easter week was appropriate. Lou Reed seems to rise from the dead every few years, and tonight he brought his followers with him.

They came out in their droves to pay homage, baying their requests into every silence, frenziedly applauding the most minor crowd-pleasing grimace. They came in their bondage trousers, tatty leathers, drab donkey jackets. They had dyed blonde hair and dark glasses, thin ashen faces, shaking hands and discreet habits.

They are the twilight children of the last decade; the walking dead and those still dying from the inside, losers and cynics and those who believe in nothing but the romance of their own degradation. The desperate ones who've settled for no future at the dark end of the street.

Tonight Lou Reed, their avatar of decay, failed to deliver and his minions failed to notice. He played for two and a half hours, he played most of his best songs, and he was still dreadful.

I hated the way he swamped the songs with turgid, bombastic attempts to be funky. I hated the way he posed and preened around the stage, jerking halfheartedly through an occasional routine like some epileptic Frankenstein's monster. Most of all I hated the way that, with a few imperious waves of his podgy arm, he had all the photographers hustled from the front of the stage during his third number.

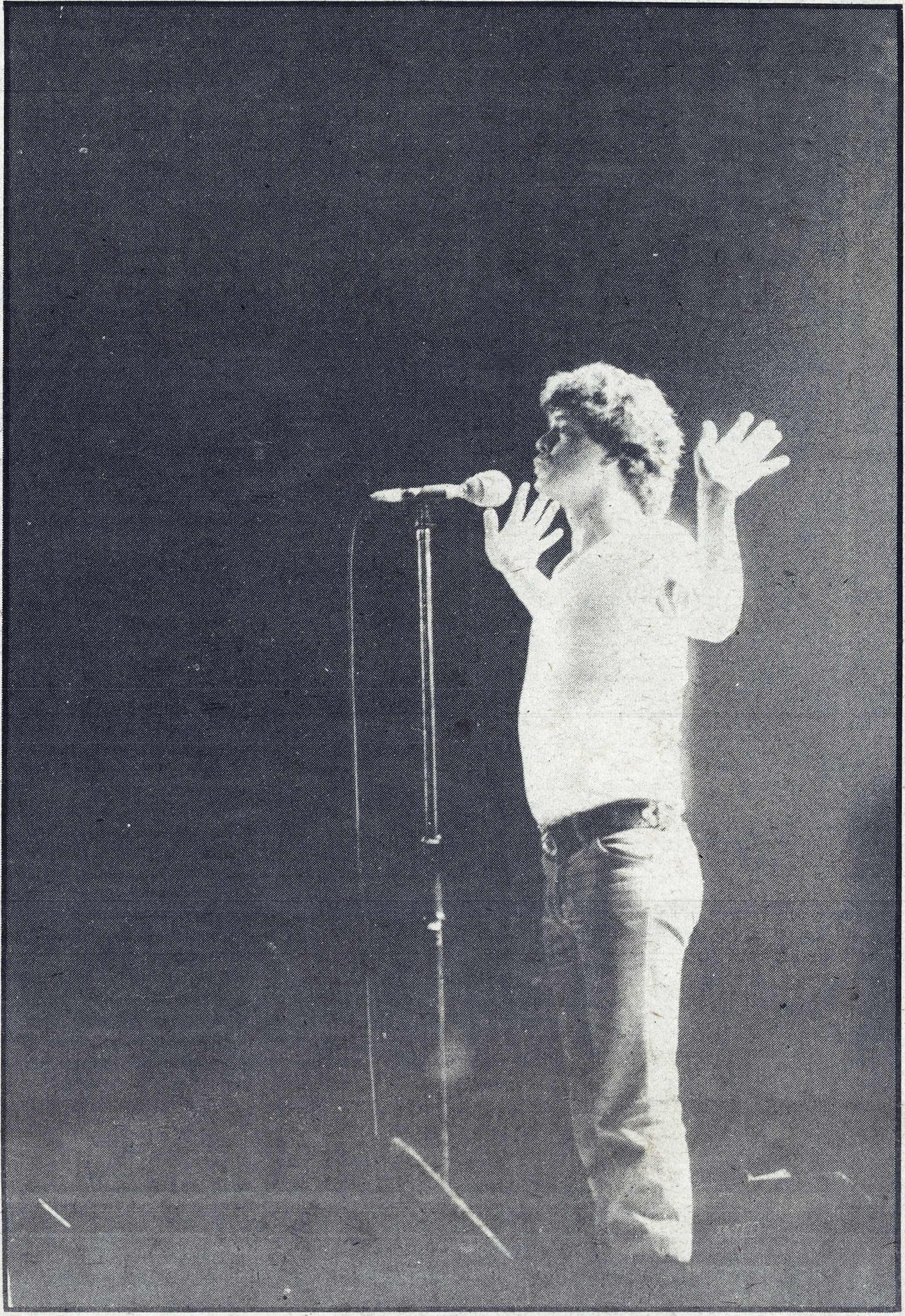
"I've never like journalists and photographers," he sneered at the end of the debacle, "so I was just having them removed. They got in free so they haven't lost anything."

No, you creep, only their bloody living!

Listen, I am *angry*. What is it with these obnoxious American egoists? Patti Smith *kicks* a photographer; Lou Reed has them bundled out of the theatre. For chrissakes, they're only doing their job. And the official souvenir programme — wouldn't ya have guessed it? — was packed with favourable reviews and live pix.

What was that again about journalists and photographers, Lou?

The gig itself was an edgy mixture of boredom and irritation. Reed insisted that the house lights were kept on during his performance, this wrecking any chance of a suitable atmosphere developing. The band were slick, tough and — when they gave each other a little room — very good. Sadly, they played mostly as an ensemble, overwhelming both tunes and vocals with a crude funky wall-of-sound steamroller effect; or else they indulged themselves playing 'pass the solo' for minutes on end, rarely striking the least spark of excitement.



REED: clapped out cult figure from the bozo zone? Pic PENNIE SMITH.

And Lou Reed can't sing much any more.

When he spoke the words, he was brilliant — the timing and phrasing exactly right. But when he tried to *sing*, a tortured croak was all that came out and this was promptly stomped on by the band.

The first hour was excruciating.

Two examples: a tedious instrumental led into a revamped 'I'm Waiting For The Man', done now as a slow-motion boogie. Imagine Canned Heat fronted by John Belushi. It was *baaad*. A little later 'Perfect Day' was savaged by Reed's pathetic attempt to sing falsetto. Apparently, he's been listening to The Isley Brothers. Gosh, Lou, and I'd thought 'I Wanna Be Black' was a joke!

Things improved dramatically with a strong, lean version of 'Men Of Good Fortune', followed by the whole of side two of 'Berlin'. The band were suitably restrained, Reed seemed involved with his singing, and the stark power of those songs was overwhelming. Then he blew it by underselling 'Street Hassle' as a comedy item.

The encore was little better than an insult.

'Bells', from the new album, lurched from one interminable crescendo to another, with Reed offstage for most of the time. Then a few bars of 'Rock And Roll' segued into a histrionic 'You Keep Me Hanging On' — sung by the bass player — which went on and on and *on* and *ON*. Everyone took a solo. Everyone took another solo. The sax player did some laboured Coltrane; the drummer reminded us, alas, of Ginger Baker.

People sat down, chewed gum and talked among themselves. A woman behind me fell asleep. The one next to me walked out.

Eventually it turned into a brief, garbled 'Sister Ray' and that was it.

At least he didn't play any of 'Sally Can't Dance'; at least he didn't do 'Kicks' which (with 'Bodies') must be the most unforgivably sick and immoral song ever recorded. But nothing he did play came close to rescuing this gig. Reed had little energy, less commitment and no charisma.

The evening was one crushing, oppressive, indulgent thrash.

So bye bye, Lou. Die again soon and next time don't bother to come back. The last thing we need is another clapped-out cult figure from the bozo zone.

Who wants yesterday's man?

Graham Lock

The Ugly Faces Of HM

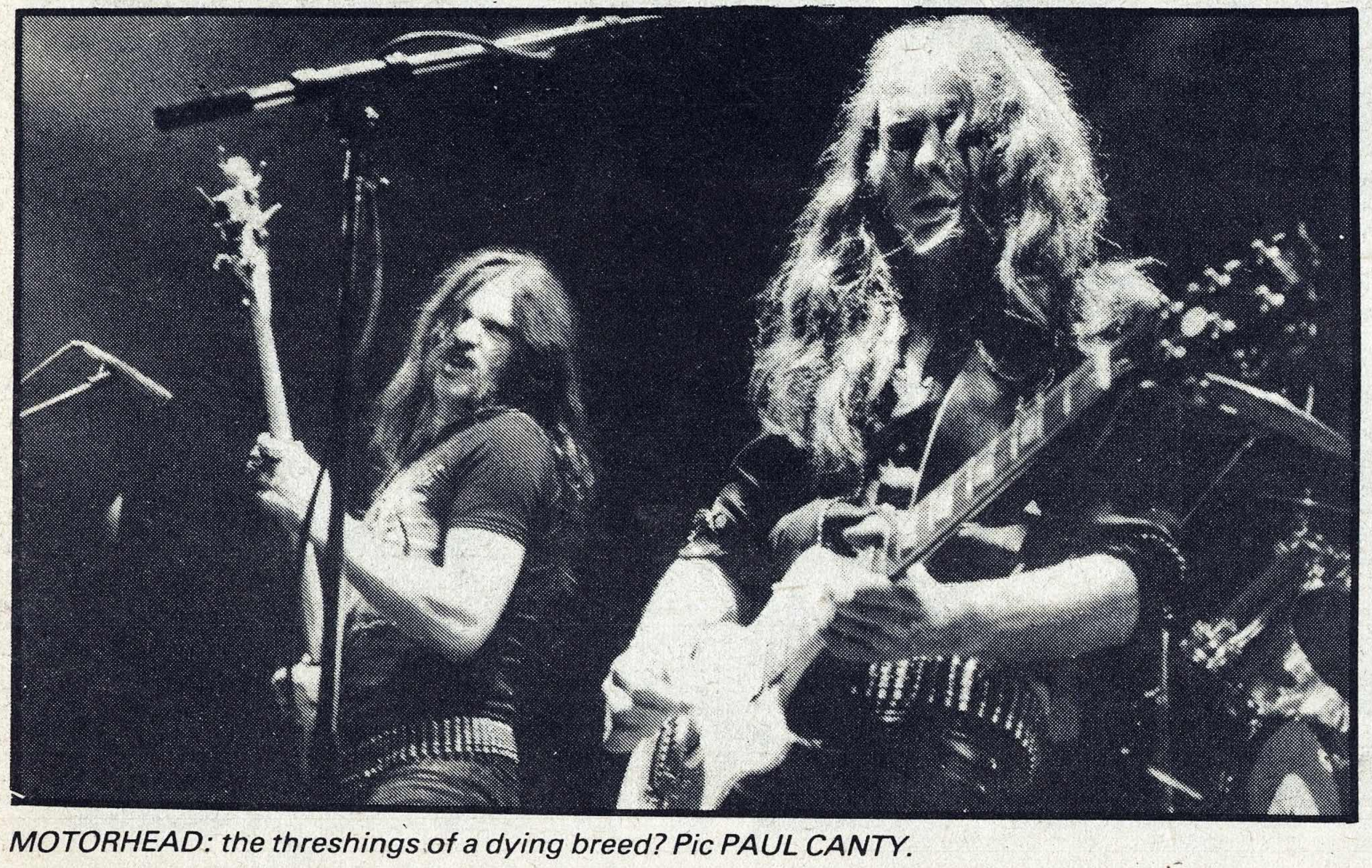
Motorhead
Lyceum

You either love 'em or you hate 'em.

They must be the ugliest, noisiest, loudest bunch of 'musicians' in the world; the definitive sound of heavy metal assaulting your senses, numbing your brain and shattering your eardrums. Motorhead, the never-to-be-forgotten emperors of sound. Or so I'd heard.

Crap. They're three heavies who pulverise their instruments with the volume full-up trying to disguise that they're off-key most of the time and regurgitating meaningless, empty guitar-hammering and drum-bashing. No matter what your musical taste, when a sound is this distorted there is no point in paying to be deafened by an unrecognisable wall of sound.

They opened with the title track from their new album 'Overkill', music to shake your head to — either to indicate that you appreciated that this was 'a rock concert', or that you had noticed from the beginning that each of them was totally oblivious of the other members of the band. Phil Taylor made a good job of keeping the basic rhythm but it seemed like the same beat all the way through.



MOTORHEAD: the threshings of a dying breed? Pic PAUL CANTY.

They dutifully and desperately dedicated their numbers as appropriately as possible: 'Iron Horse' to all the Hells Angels (I didn't see any); 'The Watcher' to all the psychedelics. But we were listening to the threshings of a dying breed.

It all steadily degenerated — the sound, the 'musicianship', the vocals and the material merged into a quagmire of noise, happily ploughing through six million brain cells per second, and culminating in 'White Line Fever' and 'Motorhead'. And then they tried to blind us with a piercing white light and luminous green backdrop.

If you want raucous sensory distortion, this is it. They epitomise dischord and disenchantment.

Girlschool were worse: their music was totally uninspiring unimaginative and immature. They appeared to have no direction, and little idea of what they were doing — a monotonous slough of anonymity.

And Nutz . . . well at least they only tortured one audience with their smooth, trebly, popular-American brand of rock, with long harmonies and facile 'special' guitar effects. This won them the Worst Band Of The Night award hands down (and instruments, please) and rounded off a disastrous evening.

Deannne Pearson

The Distractions
Liverpool

The Distractions must be the ultimate Second Generation Manchester band.

While most of their confederates have concluded only one duff record deal, The Distractions have had three.

The first produced a still-born single which never appeared through various wrangles; their second was an EP for which they get royalties from the 6001st copy (guess how many copies were pressed?); happily their third dotted-line looks more hopeful, even if the producers of this upcoming effort are the same parties responsible for the vinyl debut of the talking dog of *That's Life* infamy.

Ruff justice, what?

The same luck finds The Distractions sharing a bill with the UK Subs whose phenomenal lack of talent is only matched by their audience's total commitment to dismembering a hastily erected crash barrier.

The Distractions certainly provide a visual contrast to black leather and moody rebellion.

Stage centre, cuddly vocalist Mike Finney fulfils all the sartorial requirements of males at the Ritz, having foregone his usual silver lame in favour of a more discreet black satin. Guitarist Steve Perrin is no less natty in suit, bassist Pipnicholls (her spelling) sports an amazing psychedelic pyjama top, a steal at ten pence from Marks and Sparks; which leaves the more muscular members of the band — Adrian Wright (guitar) veteran drummer Alex Sidebottom — looking distinctly threadbare. either.

It's amazing such a motley crew can produce such a crisp demonstration of tuneful pop excellence, their own originals proving the missing link between oldies like 'What'cha Gonna Do 'Bout It?' and an abnormally good rendition of 'I'm Waiting For The Man'.

But while their concise approach is circa '65, the knowing glances and lyrical realism are right up to date. For The Distractions, love is only a maybe, and the dreaming ceased a longtime ago. Now the phones never ring, nobody can be trusted and nothing bothers 'em. Got the picture?

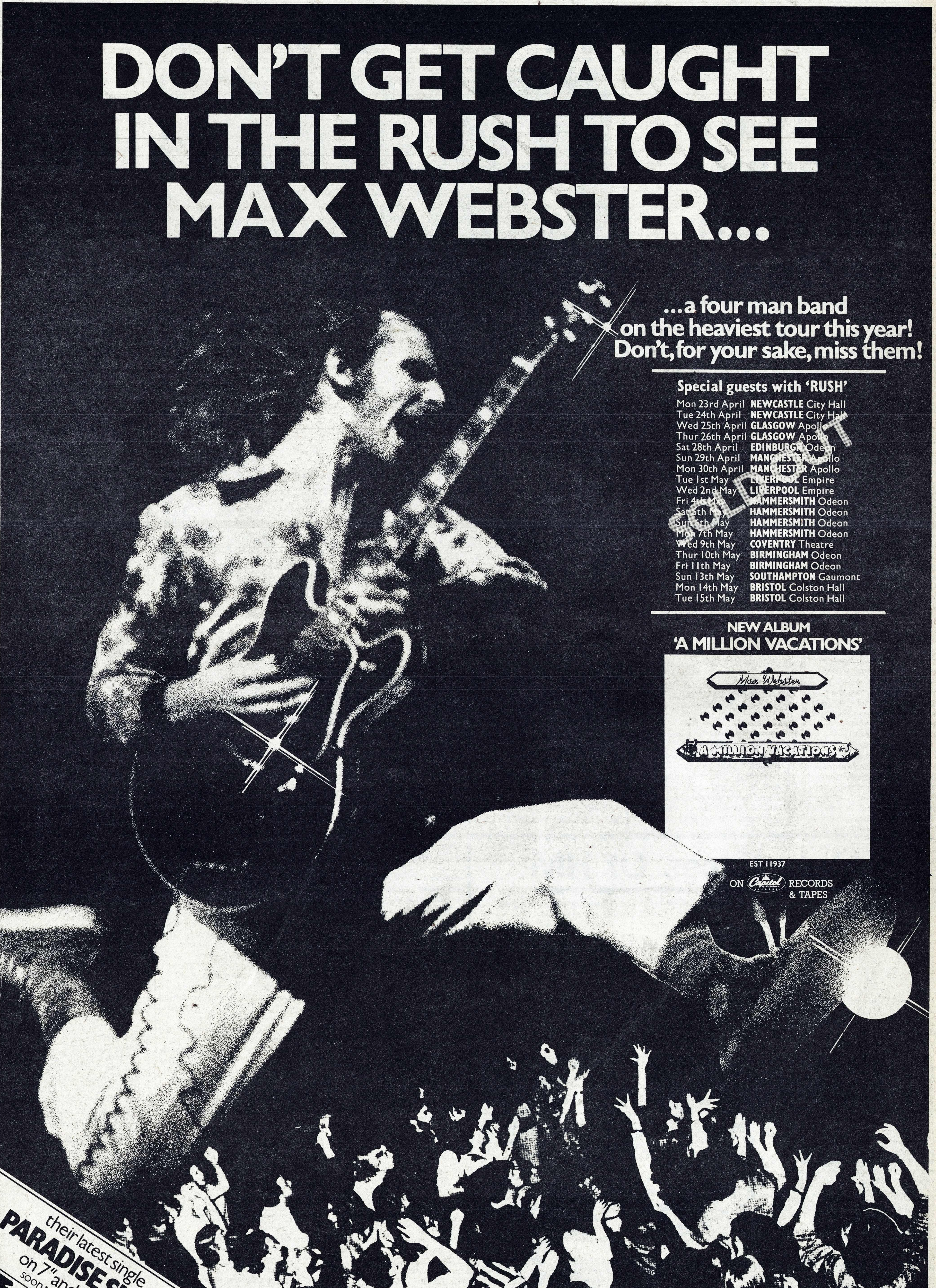
And while the Shangri Las looked sadly into the sunset, The Distractions aim for retribution with the set's highlights, the terminal 'I'm Tired' and the hilarious 'Paracetemol Paralysis'.

It's a performance of A-sides only, firmly driven by Sidebottom's powerful drum attack and steered by Finney's gruff but distinctive vocals.

The Distractions are the Last Pop Group from Manchester, at the very boundaries of innocence and sly knowing. Or as they put it succinctly . . .

I love Valerie/
But Valerie loves you . . .

Ian Wood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Sun 6th May HAMMERSMITH Odeon
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Wed 9th May COVENTRY Theatre
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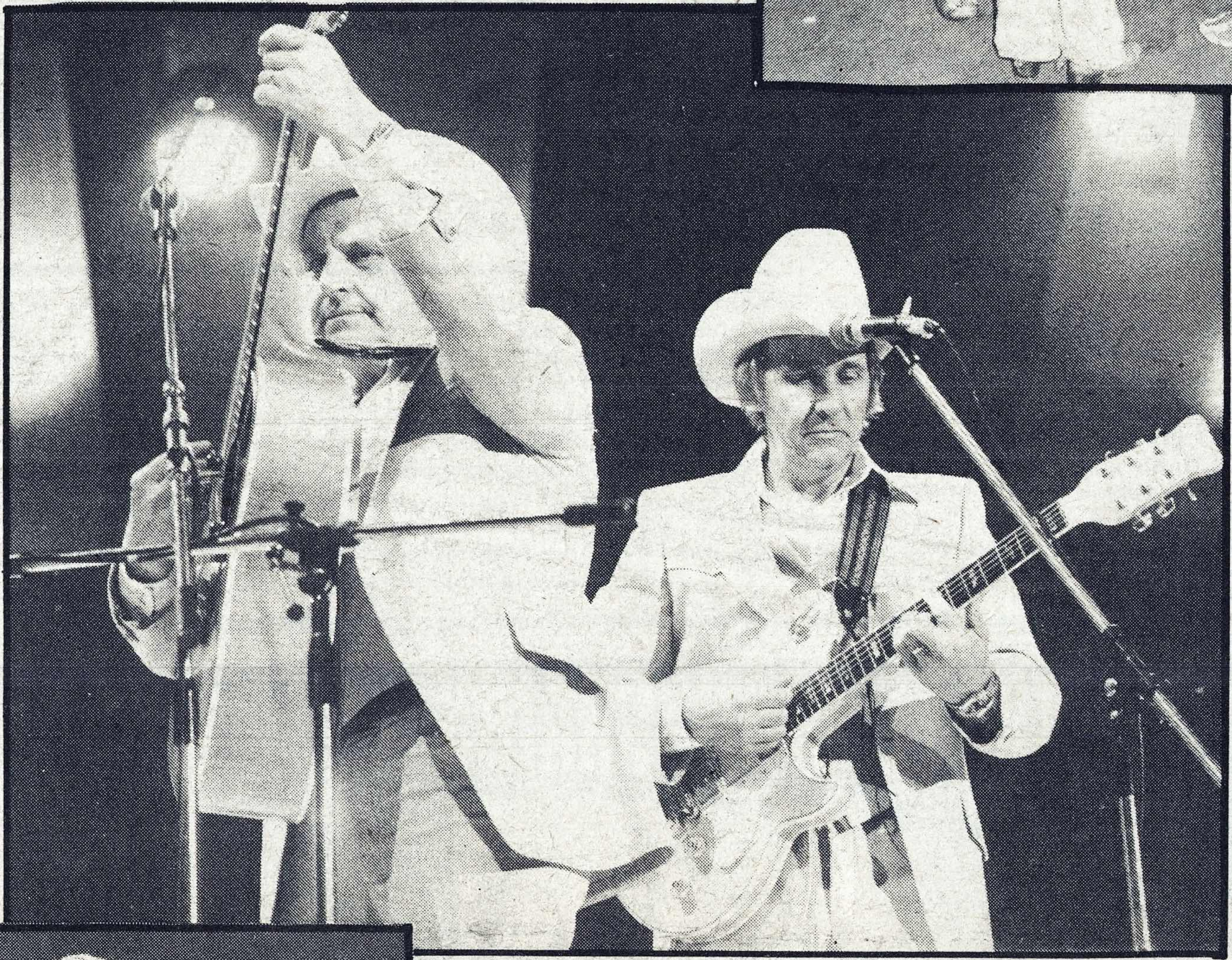
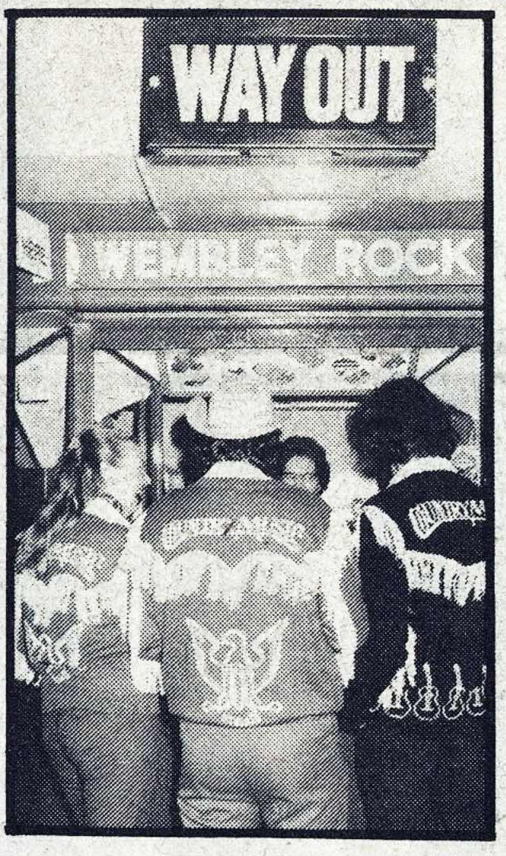


Top (from left): DON GIBSON; a Wild Bunch. Centre: THE DRIFTING COWBOYS.



Below (from left): MARTY ROBBINS; a Tame Bunch; BILLIE JO SPEARS.

Puttin' on the agony, puttin' on the style

Country Festival veterans FRED DELLAR and ROY THOMPSON pin on sheriff's badges for the three-day shoot-out at the Wembley corral. CHRIS HORLER snaps and sniggers.

11th Country Music Festival

Wembley Arena

There was despondency in the press dug-out even before a stetson had appeared on the horizon.

"Dull this year," remarked one noted New Country flagwaver. "No Ely, no Outlaws . . . and Asleep At The Wheel have gone and jacked it in."

"Rhubard, rhubarb", agreed the rest of the sage-brush pundits, readying themselves for the predictably rush of 'Orange Blossom Special' repeats and multitudinous tributes to Hank Williams.

"It take a brave man . . ." commenced a grizzled Wembley vet, while a young cub seeing action for the the first time clutched a rosary before going over the top.

Given the doubtful honour of opening spot, Nancy Pepper, the Patsy Cline of Haggis-land, lost out to a bad PA. Next came another sound-alike in the shape of the paupers' Jim Reeves, Al Doherty, who merely lost out.

First blood of the night was struck by award-winning fiddler Billy Armstrong, stomping on with 'Alabama Jubilee' a ploy that involved the audience in some heated hand-warming. He also provided the first 'Orange Blossom Special' of the series — an almost national anthem-like way of bringing the crowd to its feet.

Following Armstrong in quick succession came long-term stayer Hank Locklin, sounding and looking Sanatogen youthful as he reprised 'Send Me The Pillow' and other mouldy oldies; the uninspiring but popular Philomeana Begley; the neatly professional but ultimately dull Poacher; and karate blackbelt holder Freddie Hart, who touted 'Easy Loving' plus other hits in less effective manner than that displayed in '78.

First half closer was the immaculately garbed Marty Robbins, as kiss-blowin' camp as ever. And though the routines were in time-honoured mould, Robbins' overblown personality once more convinced the cheer-leaders that they had cottoned on to something fresh and he was able to chasse off in winning style.

The hilarious Ronnie Prophet, undoubtedly the best emcee ever to find employment at the fest, then announced the Duffy Brothers, fine musicians but appalling humourists, who later made way for Gloria, an Irish export without the appeal of Guinness.

It was now the turn of Texas' Boxcar Willie, sartorially a kind of hobo-happy Tom Waits. He sang winning songs for losers and whistle-assisted railroad stompers, grabbing the whole audience through his warmth and individuality. An unlikely superstar, he lifted the festival by the scruff of its neck and shook it back to life. Sweet and petite Dottsy came and went before the strains of 'Stay All Night' heralded the arrival of The Drifting Cowboys, a geriatric quartet who backed Hank Williams way back in '49. Only provided with 20 minutes in which to add a further chapter to country history, they headed off with 'Move It On Over', a Hank Williams song that was perhaps the first true rock'n'roll number, then stuck rigidly to Hank specials, recreating the orginal sounds and reviving old memories.

Again the applause clapometer registered strongly and Billie Jo Spears was dumped in a 'follow that' situation. A vocal powerhouse — she often blasted the mike — Billie Jo did her Greatest Hits bit and bowed out to a warm reception.

Down in the dug-out the scores were being counted. Boxcar, The Drifting Cowboys and Billy Armstrong had really hit the tally-sheet. "Old Time 3, New Country O,", announced one wag.

And so to bed.

If Saturday had proved a jubilation day for minor label stars (none of the six hitters are currently with a major record company), then Sunday was to provide a fiesta for those with more lucrative contracts.

Jeannie Denver, a Loretta Lynn look-alike; Vernon Oxford, an American singer / fiddler who is too 'pure' for his homeland audience; the dishy Jana Jae, a classically trained fiddle player from the *Hee Haw* TV show; and Irish star Ray Lynam all played their parts in the hors d'oeuvre department — CBS signing Moe Bandy gaining the first true encore of the day with his drinking and cheating song.

Musically perched on a barstool mountain overlooking a whiskey river, the now bearded Bandy is a straight-down-the-line act, late '50s in style. Both country past and country present, he's got it made as far as Wembley's concerned. But — just as Haggard topped him in '78, Ronnie Milsap grabbed the laurel-wreath right out of Moe's hands in '79, putting in a performance that made the dug-out wonder why so many Milsap discs manage to sound totally bland.

Led on a la Ray Charles, Milsap, once an R'n'B man of black ghetto potency, hurtled into some righteous gospel, his back-up band — which appeared to sport a female steelie and a Chicano drummer — providing the evening's best surround-sound. He then did his whole-gamut thing, splicing unleavened Nashville with doses of pure pop, adding impressions of Elvis, Jerry Lee ("I'd stand on this piano but my jeans are too tight!") and Eddy Arnold, before offering a fine, alone-at-the piano interpretation of Mickey Newbury's 'Ups And Downs Of Love', displaying an impressive vocal and emotional range.

Tumultuously received, he encored with a riotous 'Honky Tonk Women', Stones' licks 'n'all. At which point New Country, who'd been asleep all day, suddenly awoke from his slumbers and cheered for the good times before hibernating again.

Barbara Fairchild, a kind of hillbilly Petula Clark whose raps are largely incomprehensible, ditched the neo-jazz approach of her last album and opted for the safety of 'Teddy Bear' and such, scoring well on personality and effort. It was left to Don Gibson to remind us once more that he penned 'Oh Lonesome Me', 'Sweet Dreams' and 'I Can't Stop Loving You' before Floyd Cramer boogied on with 'Flip, Flop And Fly', eventually providing *his* Hank Williams medley.

Meanwhile Tammy Wynette had arrived under a close security guard and proceeded to offer a slightly truncated version of the show she presented on her last ill-fated trip to these shores. Looking and sounding healthy and completely relaxed, in contrast to her husband George Ritchey who was displaying symptoms of the raving hab-dabs, Tammy did the 'Stand By Your Man' walk-about, shaking hands with half the people in the arena.

Which meant that the fans went home in a well-satisfied frame of mind.

Monday's six and a half hour stint began around 4 pm, and backed by members of Gonzalez and Meal Ticket, Lonnie Donegan was among the early fence-fallers. It was at this stage that Conway Twitty took over.

A greaser no more, he now sports a nattily permed coiffure and he's even undergone a personality change. Where once he lacked real onstage confidence, now he commands attention. And though after three numbers he still hadn't captured the crowd, things altered when he elected for the safety of (gulp) a Hank Williams medley.

From then on it was cream-cheese with 'I've Never Been This Far Before' and an ecstatically received 'It's Only Make Believe'. Pandemonium unlimited.

Afterwards, Jim and Jesse's fine little bluegrass band contributed their usual flawless exhibition of harmony vocals and allied instrumental expertise, the only other act of consequence being recent Bill Graham signing, Bobby Bare.

Looking vaguely like Jack Elam at sun-up, Bare, all faded jeans and 'what the hell' in approach, seemed a reticent hero. Lumbered with a short stay ticket, he proffered 'Detroit City', 'Streets Of Baltimore', '500 Miles Away From Home' and other '60s bread-winners, doing the simple things right. All ease and casual like crazy, he finally swamp-rocked into 'Hot Afternoon', a humorous piece of mild erotica and headed hat held high for the door.

More potent was the six and a half feet tall Sleepy LaBeef, whose frame made his guitar look like a toothpick.

A rockabilly with an ability that would have slayed 'em at the Royalty, LaBeef discovered that the Wembley crowd rallied but mildly and the dug-out denizens wondered if even headliner Crystal Gayle could stir their souls. But, bless her three feet length of derriere-dusting hair, she queened it in a manner befitting her royal country heritage, belting out 'I'll Get Over You' and other tonsil-testers with an alacrity that belied her Dresden-doll looks.

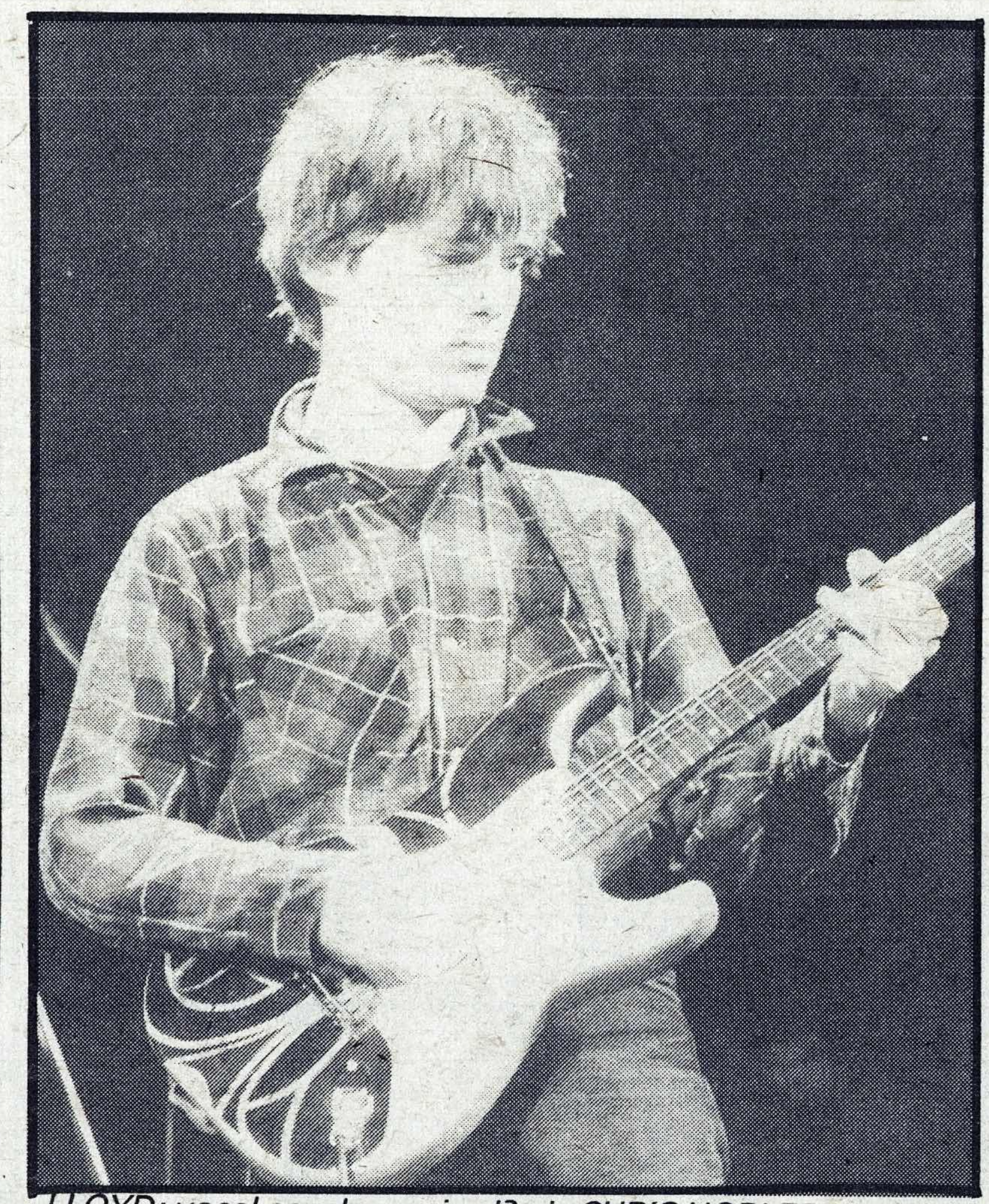
Aided by a more than useful band, she blues-wailed through an organ-drenched 'Night Life' in best torch style, honey-hushed 'Talking In My Sleep' to the delight of the coyotes in the gallery. And to a final chorus of "wha-hoo's" she headed off on the Piaf-like knees-up that is 'One More Time'.

"She wasn't country!" remarked the dug-out sprog, reeling from the effects of 44 acts and three dozen Hank Williams songs.

"But at least she didn't try 'Orange Blossom Special' on a jaws-harp," declared the wise old vet.

"Hooray for her," chorused the rest and departed for the real world.

Lloyd switches to another channel



LLOYD: vocal coach required? pic CHRIS HORLER

Passing the (Young) Buck? Pic NIGEL HADLEY

Richard Lloyd The Necessaries

New York

The Necessaries look and act like they want to be rock stars: *not* 'rock stars' fatuously posing with exaggerated histrionics, because this band are streamlined, no-nonsense, tough to the bone. They just have an endearing, if somewhat cheeky, confidence unusual in a band together only a few months.

Of course some of these guys are veterans of sorts: drummer Jessi Chamberlaine played with Red Crayola; lead singer and guitarist Ed Tomney used to sing with The Harry Toledo Band; bassist Ernie Brooks was with the original Modern Lovers who recorded that classic Cale-produced demo-album of the same name.

Tomney has cropped black hair and could, if he had a more intense delivery, come over as an American Joe Strummer. And also on guitar is Randy Gunn — a choppy, aggressive rhythm player who sports a Keith Richard rat's-nest hairstyle, he has a tough, bad-boy face, and roams around the back of the stage slinging his guitar down low like a loaded sub-machine gun. So it's quite a surprise when he steps up front to sing 'I Do', the band's most popish number, and reveals a sweet, high-pitched voice reminiscent of Tom Petty's.

Their songs are modern pop: early Hollies-meet-punk with catchy melodies that let the band rock it hard. 'I Do' would have been a sure AM-classic had it been released in the late '60s; 'Beautifully Neurotic Girls' and 'I Feel Tension' feature more sing-a-long hooks and high energy.

But the topper is 'Law And Order', a song about various mates who've been busted by New York's PD. It's proof that even 'complacent' Yanks can produce legitimate street protest songs for the '70s. While Gunn slashes at the chords, Tomney pulls out some high-tension lead playing that by the end of the night will prove to have out-Lloyded Richard Lloyd.

Since Television's breakup, Lloyd has been the most seen of the ex-members, first playing around town in various jam sessions and now fronting his own band.

The quartet have former Television partner Fred Smith on bass and ex-Feelie Vincent DeNunzio on drums producing a formidable, totally solid rhythm section. They manage to anchor Lloyd's songs when they get overly abstract and keep the blood pumping when the rockers become pedestrian. Second guitar is James Mastro, a relatively unknown New Jerseyian and very competent player; but the mutual push of the Lloyd-Verlaine combination is missed.

Lloyd sings with his guitar, and has trouble with his voice. But although it's hoarse, he still uses it with conviction, and sometimes sings with real emotional force.

Another problem is that Lloyd has yet to come into his own as a songwriter.

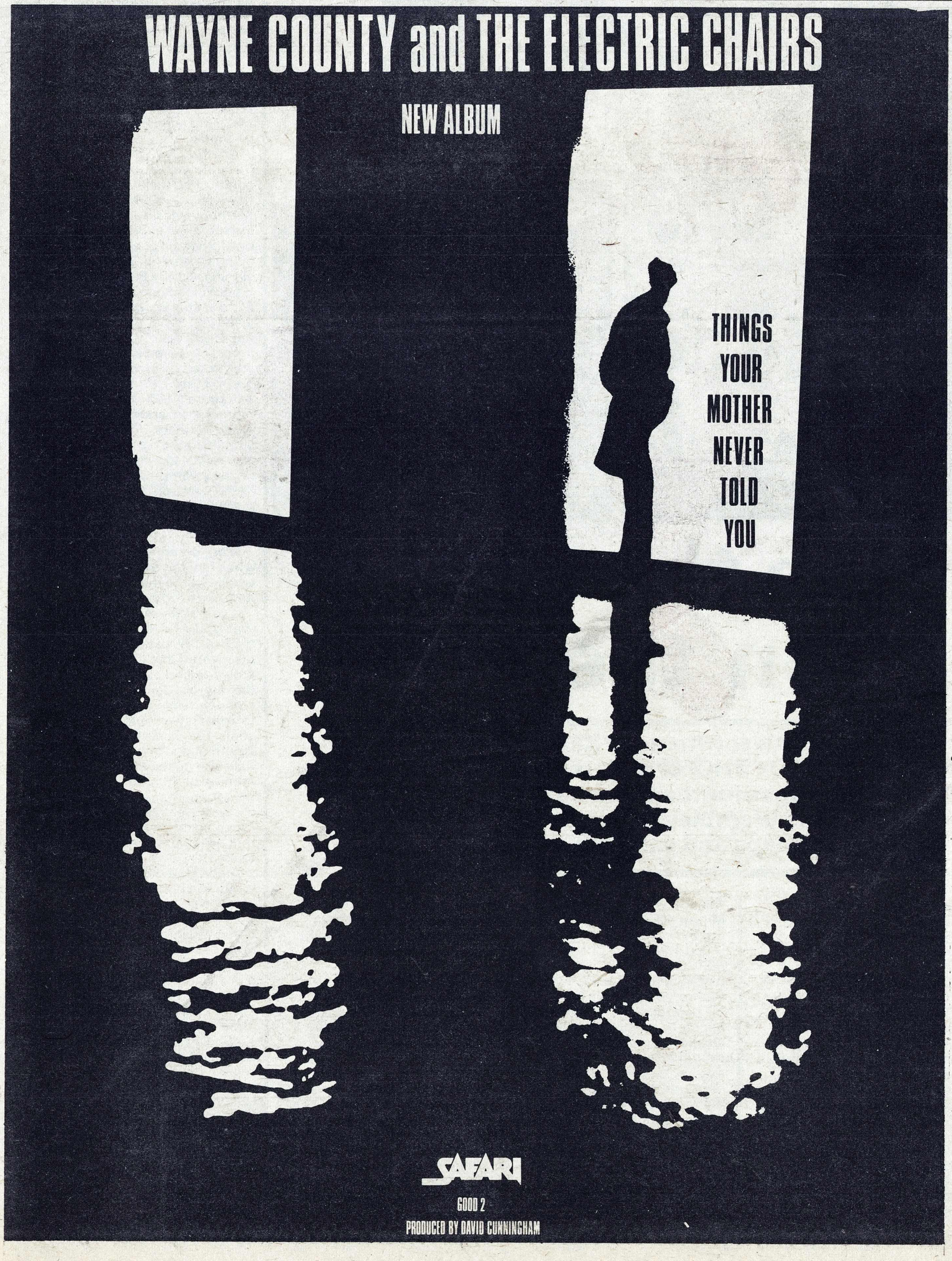
There are slow songs such as 'I'm A Dreamer' which are attempts to be cryptic and atmospheric but they lack poetry. There are hard rockers like 'Should Have Known Better' that are too ordinary, saved only by Lloyd's concentrated guitar work. His playing cuts through even the most mundane rhythm with high-pitched, acid-tinged lyricism.

In the end we remember the player, not the song.

The one exception is a beautiful rocking ballad called 'Woman's Ways' which features Lloyd on some Dylan-style wailing harmonica. Lyrically down to earth and honest (*"There's a lot about a woman's ways I just don't understand"*), Lloyd sings it convincingly.

Give Lloyd some singing lessons and this band could be a threat. But meantime, The Necessaries stole the show.

Richard Grabel



Young Bucks

Music Machine

The Young Bucks' masterplan is direct and obvious. They're out to prove that the market for solid, boozy, goodtime dancerock is alive and still kicking. And the way they do this is both blatant and inefficient.

Without resorting to revivalist ransacking of the '60s idiom that their name reflects, they merely apply its R & B/soul phrasing to their own updated brand of locomotion.

A six-piece line-up including tenor, alto and keyboards gives them adequate power and range; the effect is a staunch collision somewhere between Detroit Tamla and Van Morrison vintage '73.

Initially it's their tested professional ease that leaves me unmoved. Of the frontline, both vocalists — Archie Brown and Tony Wadsworth — go through the motions with moderate flair but fail to inject any vital exuberance. When he trades his keyboards for guitar and steals into the spotlight, Pat Rafferty's strained, manic leaps make a nervous, heavy-handed contrast.

They play with confident precision — all but crophead drummer Seb Wang whose obsession with hi-hat and bass pedal leaves it a sparse and colourless rhythm section. Also, an overworked tenor sax echoes the feel of the '60s without assisting any new direction.

The strongest moments in a sagging set are 'Cold Cold Morning', 'Seen It All Before' polished sound — 'Dance Music', as Wadsworth so frequently reminds the inactive. But overall, it's unadventurous and insubstantial, containing all the right ingredients except strong melodies.

It's a set that leaves you bruised but unable to remember a single tune responsible.

It's not that I'm unsympathetic to their cause. I admire The Young Bucks' approach; I admire their choice of influences, and the ingenious way they disguise them. But they celebrate very little, and even that seems to pass me by.

Mark Ellen

The Carpettes

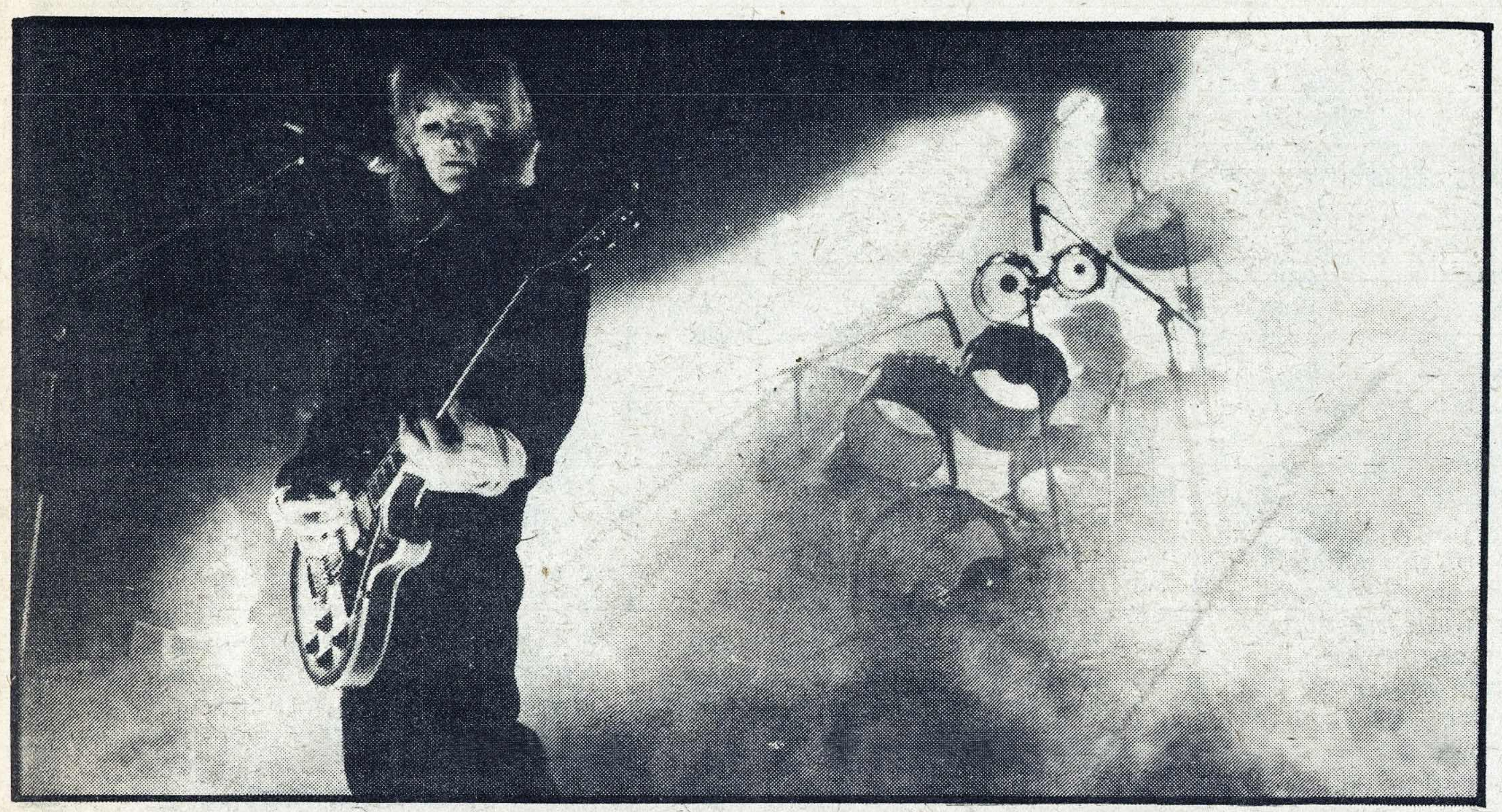
Pegasus

Another nervous and under-rehearsed band metamorphosed after two numbers into a relaxed and assured new wavering rock trio. Their music had a carefully balanced reggae influx, producing the best sounds I've heard for a long time.

A solid, driving force cut through the smooth, polished veneer of sound which sucked everything into its strong clean current, particularly in numbers like 'ABC', 'What Can I Do', and their final numbers — 'Indo China', a raucous, arresting wall of noise, and 'Super Hero', an encore by special request.

An excellent performance, sadly marred by vocals shared between George Maddison (bass) and Neil Thompson (guitar) which floundered and came dangerously close to drowning in places as their voices lack the power and range of their music.

Deanne Pearson



JAPAN: pretentious tripe? Pic SIMON FOWLER

Japan's limp wrists and snooty cool

Japan
Rainbow

Japan, so swishy in their satin and tat, have often found themselves accused of crass glam-rock revivalism. But they haven't so much revived the genre as helped kill it off.

Last year they were the target of some strangely back-handed admiration, mainly of the 'so-bad-they're-good' variety. Unfortunately for them, the band have now improved to the stage where they're so average they're neither bad nor good — bereft of that redeeming awfulness and yet lacking in any positive qualities as well.

So what we have is a moderately competent but half-hearted outfit who seem unsure of what they want to do, or even of why they exist at all.

Front-person David Sylvain has often been quoted as claiming audience hostility for inspiration — and as five precious pretty boys playing support slots on the blood-and-iron Heavy Metal circuit, hostility was never in short supply for them.

But tonight they're bill-toppers and preaching to the converted (though rather too few to fill the prestigious venue selected) and consequently the show is disappointingly polite.

While it's pleasant enough in an innocuous way, Japan's music is essentially characterless: a bland amalgam of lyrical name-drops and vogue-ish themes ('Rhodesia', 'Suburban Berlin') on top of market-researched components (prefabricated dub-funk or mechanical Teuton disco-beat), all rooted in a five year vintage heavy rock format.

The band go through the motions of performance without an iota of personality, relying on the dry-ice so much for effect that they're totally obscured for much of the set. Worse though was the home-movie being projected above Sylvain's remarkable hair-cut, depicting the band in a series of fanciful poses: looking weird, acting moody, feeling alienated, being bi-sexual. . .

In short, Japan's act is saddled with some pretentious tripe (unless it's supposed to be a joke, in which case why wasn't anybody laughing?). It consistently falls between two stools in that the response the music seems to aim for — simple bopalong headbanging — is at odds with the over-riding image — a kind of over-sophisticated ennui.

This underlying confusion is reflected in Japan's lack of a clearly-defined market. Obviously the be-denimed boogie-lovers would be repelled by the limp-wristed narcissism and snooty cool that the band exude, while I suspect that most others will find them dated and irrelevant, the least interesting amongst a surfeit of alternatives.

So discounting the residual London poseur contingents — the odd berk in a monocle and so on — theirs is a nondescript audience and one without any marked degree of commitment to the group.

Which is not to say that the problem lies with the audience; when Japan begin to show more commitment to what they're doing then, and only then, can they count on breaking out of what must be a dying trade.

Paul Du Noyer

Psychedelic Furs
Moonlight Club

After being suddenly shot from support to headline, using a stand-in drummer and an agonising sound-mix, to say The Psychedelic Furs 'died' on this occasion would be bordering on charity.

Accepted that I missed the set's finer points (like lyrics), the band's obvious debts and identity still filtered through in endearingly haywire fashion. They attempt a seedy, determined re-vamp of The Velvet Underground, getting mileage out of two-chord slogs that would astound even The Lightning Raiders. The result is raucous, incessant boogie music, with its wisely underplayed 'psychedelic' fag inspired by deviant jamming, red shades and the odd paisley- patterned beach shirt.

They need to recognise there are limits to looseness and install some direction in the unstructured doodlings of their sax and guitars. Unchanged, their staunch opposition to the current wave of schizoid combos could be too short lived to record.

Mark Ellen

Raincoats Swell Maps
Moonlight Club

Yet more unorthodox imagination linked to the Rough Trade enterprise; Birmingham's Swell Maps, who modify boogie pulp music with a buoyant approximation, and London's impulsive and lustful Raincoats, slamming a distinctive and destructive punch into tiring and strict rock formats.

This first gig of the year for the carefree Maps was fabulously energetic, even more reckless than their two maxi-singles suggested, and gradually charmed an initially sceptical audience.

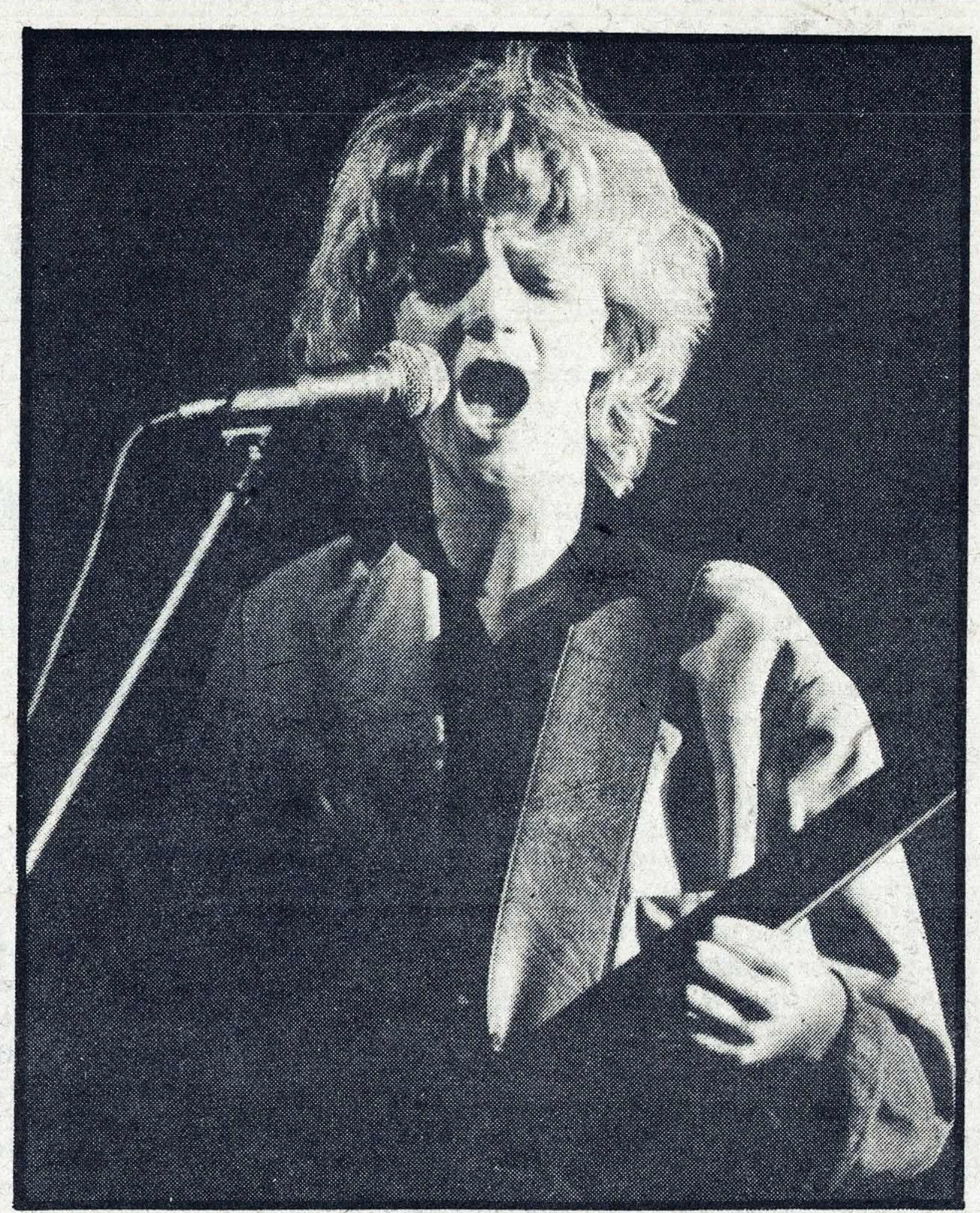
Unawed star of tomorrow guitarist/singer Nikki Sudden — who sings with addictive, dry indifference — has Shelley-style casual campness, and rest of the quartet possess a coy defiance reminiscent of dingy Buzzcocks club days.

They are a POP group, even if their melodies are hardly frivolous, their music hardly tidy, and Sudden proudly handles a copy of the Gibson Sunburst guitar his idol Marc Bolan used to play.

They capture the essence of naive pop-punk, from Shadows Of Night to The Skids, and play restless, relentless music which, in attack if not in sound, comes close to that irregularly economic and parched Buzzcocks period just after Devoto's departure, and captured inadequately on the first Roxy album. They don't have a hypercritical regard for discipline or safety, but they do have plenty of gleeful composure.

But Raincoats project less wilfully irrational and more spontaneously than The Slits. They seem in control. They consider more than just the image and the container. They are extremely compelling — and they're going to make records soon.

Paul Morley



A RAINCOAT won't let you down. Pic PHILIP GREY

LINTON

■ *From page 8*

his albums have caused such a critical bias — they are, after all, among the first to concentrate directly and exclusively on the British black experience without resorting, for obvious reasons, to Rasta sloganeering — but their pre-eminence in this respect has tended to overshadow their musical qualities.

So, to set the record straight (or round), I'll simply add that I'm not alone in considering both 'Dread, Beat An' Bood' and 'Forces Of Victory' — both of which were incidentally also produced by Johnson with the help of mixmaster Dennis 'Blackbeard' Bovell of Matumbi — to be two of the finest and hardest reggae albums to have appeared in recent times.

Johnson's move from Virgin's Front Line to Island is readily explained.

"Virgin's approach to black music was too much of a colonialist one. They concentrated too much on Africa and not enough on the market here. In the sense that they're in it for the money, they're no worse than any other company. They're probably less ruthless in fact, but I don't think they have any serious, longterm outlook. It's just grab everything black as quick as you can — rather than spending money on something and wait and build up results. Sow the seed and reap the crop tomorrow, you know.

"Nor did they give my album much promotion or advertising, whereas Island are prepared to spend more money on their reggae artists. You see, I take a realistic view on all this. One has to realise that art in capitalist society is only available in the commodity form. Therefore it's subject to all the laws of capitalist production. Of course it will be processed and packaged just like anything else.

"Small record labels are however very healthy and necessary. In fact, most artists should ideally aim to be independent of record companies. If only they can raise enough money and sell enough records to live, that should be the logical process. But then different people have different aspirations.

"I don't want to have to keep coming to big companies. I would like to launch my own small label as I insist on being involved with my work at all stages. That, however, is a responsibility many artists aren't prepared to take on. So they get themselves managers — and most managers, unless you're very fortunate, are parasites, just wanting a cut of the cake.

"It's the way the music business world and system is organised. A lot of these young guys in bands, they really do have dreams about making it, being stars and all that; their egos are pushing them all the time. It's unfortunate really."

And punk?

"I didn't penetrate it more than a certain amount. I don't buy those kind of records. Again, it was a very healthy movement, but it was swallowed by capital. I think it had the seeds of its own destruction in it from the very beginning. You know, in the sense that punk became fashion, it became another commodity.

"The only understanding I have of punk is from my conversations with John Lydon, right? What I gathered from them was that punk was a movement by working class kids that was more or less anti-What Was. It showed people that they could do their own thing and create their own lifestyle, their own music. It told them they didn't have to be Mick Jagger to make a record.

"But now it's ridiculous. Look at the way they handled the death of that guy Sid Vicious. I think it's sickening. Posters of his coffin and all that. They're just conning people, man, I don't care how they try and justify what they do. It's crap.

"I find, though, with my small amount of time involved with the music business, that it's one of the *nastiest*, dirtiest businesses in the world. It seems to be a very fertile ground for con men and tricksters. All kinds of ruthless and unscrupulous people. I suppose that's because there's so much money to be picked up. It's a dirty, *stinking* business."

Johnson lists Aswad, Matumbi and Reggae Regular as his favourite bands, then holds forth just as enthusiastically when I mention my own fondness for Winston Rodney aka Burning Spear.

"I think," he says, "more than anybody else, Burning Spear captures very naturally the whole folk traditions of Jamaica, all the sentiments and all the feelings of the common people. Yes, his work is very rural, and it involves the Church as well.

"A lot of his songs are like Baptist hymns or Bible songs. All those influences are very strong. Spear is a man who's inspired, deeply inspired and, although I thought his last two albums could have been better, whatever he does is very moving.

"And I tell you another person for whom I have a great respect and that's Rico Rodriguez. A lot of you journalists, you know, you talk to the wrong people. The Jamaican music and its whole history, that's Rico's *life*, man. He was there right from the beginning. He made one of the first records ever recorded in Jamaica. He's a man with a real knowledge of life itself. He's one of very few musicians who's completely committed to his music . . ."

Whereupon Rico himself enters the room in Island's Hammersmith offices. We're introduced and he conducts some brief business with Johnson before departing.

"There," Johnson smiles, "you missed your chance. But look — you and your questions have exhausted me completely. I gotta go . . ." And so he does.

ALL OF WHICH leaves me mulling over the encounter some ten days later. There's no need for me to crank up the Universal 200 and batter you with apocalyptic assessments of Linton Kwesi Johnson as some embattled figure fighting off the entire dark ages of history. No, if you haven't grasped by now that he's not that conventionally 'heroic' soldier and wouldn't even want to be portrayed as such, then I've failed to make my point.

Less hyperbole; more reality. Much of the importance of Johnson's poems and records resides in their offering us some very literal and very timely hometruths about how many black people feel about living in Britain *now*.

The British mass media have a marked tendency to simply ignore the overstuffed file of issues that confront this country. Neither national newspapers nor television give any *real* consideration to or coverage of either race problems or Northern Ireland (there are exceptions, I'll warrant, but not enough of them to break the rule).

Both these issues are unpleasant legacies of Britain's colonial and imperial days. Our state — and therefore, by extension, its populace — seem psychologically unable or unwilling to come to terms with the UK's post-war place in world affairs; instead of accepting our 'decline' as inevitable and necessary, it still insists on maintaining a pretence that 'Great' Britain is a power and an influence to be reckoned with. The fact that we're busy practising colonialism in both Northern Ireland and on the mainland itself is conveniently ignored.

Which isn't to suggest that these issues aren't covered at all. They are, but they're effectively glossed over. When the IRA blow up an MP (not that I have any sympathy with movements that kill people to state their case), we're just fobbed off with emotional humbug and rhetoric, with grand perorations about how brave and valiant a man this Airey Neave was.

I'm sure he was in his way, but that's not the point. Why, I can't help asking, have things been allowed by successive British governments in recent years to get to such a stage in Northern Ireland that not just one English politician but hundreds of innocent inhabitants of the province are murdered each and every year?

The same applies to the threats posed by the National Front and the likelihood of our police obtaining absurdly draconian powers. Columnists and commentators alike are content to spend their time juggling the finer strings of our supposedly democratic traditions. They meekly argue the toss for and against treating the Front as just another political party. They say that, although they disapprove of the Front and its racist 'programme', they must fight for its right to say its piece, blah, blah.

Meanwhile government has the gall to make an *industry* out of race relations, out of people simply trying to live together. It sets up committees to study the so-called 'ethnic minorities' like insects under a microscope and, sure enough, these worthy but worthless bodies report back with indecipherable wads of jargon and irrelevant foolscaps of statistics: cold, cold comfort.

It would be naive, of course, to expect anyone in a position of public or political influence in the UK to condescend to shed even a crocodile tear of rage or shame for the Asian and black victims of racist thuggery and police indifference in London's East End and elsewhere. I mean, how *frightfully* alarmist and hysterical to actually admit these things are going on at all, eh?

It would be even more foolish to expect any such influential notables to effect so much as a token protest on behalf of those mostly black youths railroaded into prisons or remand centres on 'sus' charges — why should they? This never happened to anybody they know . . .

In short, these issues are scooped under the bed where, one presumes, they will wait with the Reds until a time when they can be more usefully exploited for personal or political gain. Depressing, isn't it?

Pardon my self-righteous Martian — I'm not even asking for inverse discrimination on behalf of blacks and Asians against whites; that's no answer either — but all this hedging and fudging is *bullshit*.

But, I repeat, unless you've got yourself black friends already, if you really want to know how many black people in this sceptr'd (septic?) isle of ours feel most days of their lives confronted by active state hostility, then it looks like you're going to *have* to listen to Linton Kwesi Johnson — 'cos nobody else is likely to provide you with that information.

And why should you even bother to find out what blacks think and feel? For any number of good reasons. Because, if you dig any kind of contemporary music, you're listening to what began life as black music. Because sooner or later Britain is going to have to realise that it can't oppress blacks and Asians who've come here in good faith as it oppressed them the world over (well, it can keep on keeping them down, but they won't take it). Because, if you believe in social justice or any other such ideal (and there's nothing wrong with ideals, you know), you must accept that we have immense debts to repay to the peoples we colonised and brutalised so ruthlessly in previous times — that's how it goes, or rather how it should and could go in that funny old thing we call a better world.

I'm sorry. Are you still awake out there? Is this stumbling, patronising, parochial and self-obsessed little land of ours the inheritance you want to hand on to your kids? I doubt it. I really do.

RECORDS

■ *From page 29*

"The current preoccupation is Europe. What's so fascinating about Europe? There may be a certain mysticism in a band with Dresden in the name but . . . I'm not schooled in the arts or literature but there seem to be a lot of, er, literary stances."

Dilettantes?

"Yeah, them as well."

Gower points out that while there is a certain charm in hearing about a band from Wigan who've never made a record but enjoy baffling people with pedantic interpretations of Beckett and Camus, there is an inverse difficulty for a band like The Records in just getting accepted.

"In the early '70s there were bands doing what the so-called avant garde bands of today are doing. Turns out they were mostly European — Amon Duul, Wigwam, Magma — but what price the second High Tide album? High Tide were an English band with no money who took the forms and redefined them far more radically than the current stars. It was all low budget, largely independent.

"Maybe more people are broke now . . . we can't be classed in that bag."

Birch: "Exactly, I swan about in the best restaurants — I'm a complete fop, a fake, I like my mother and father, come from a good middle class background . . . me and a few million others."

After the Kursaals folded Birch and Wicks fixed their nexus on the arrival of bass player Phil Brown, late of The Janets, a Darlington lad who'd come to the smoke expecting streets of gold and ended up playing in a band with Mick Jones instead. "Phil's an enigmatic chap really; I don't know much about him."

Hugh Gower they found by coincidence. They'd auditioned 211 guitarists before they first saw Hugh playing an impromptu re-union gig in the Nashville with his old Bristol band, Ratbites From Hell. This set-up, Rats, must be classed as the great undiscovered English group of the '70s, boasting as they did a dual guitar front with Gower and Only One John Perry. Little wonder that Birch describes the gig as "a fucking classic".

A week later Gower answered an ad and found Birch with a delighted smirk opening the door to fame and fortune.

"Until Hugh came along no one reacted to the kind of sound we wanted. Me and him sat down and talked about Moby Grape and Love and The Byrds and Elektra — he was old enough to like those things and use the feeling. It's not that I wanted a manufactured sound, someone who listens to Big Star all day and copies it; no, we wanted the knowledge and the taste Hugh had. It's original, we are original. I love the backwards guitar on that Jam album, all that stuff, but it is derivative. On our song 'Held Up High', Hugh plays this solo which *sounds* like backwards guitar, only he plays it forwards."

The Records played their first gig on March 23, 1978 in the Bristol Granary Club, following this up with a spell of touring culminating in support on various Wilko Johnson ventures and then the Stiff cartel.

Last summer remained a period of frustration. Birch's solo contract with CBS hindered recording and the band were unsure who to sign with. CBS wanted the band but apparantly changed their policy daily — no surprise from the last major company to come to terms with new wave (debatable whether they ever did).

The inactivity was lightened by a game called hunt the producer. First choice was Tom Werman but Virgin nixed him 'cos he costs too much. Todd Rundgren couldn't make it until next September — I'm sure that TRB are of vital importance — and Sandy Pearlman dithered and is now producing Japan for his sins. Enter R J Lange, a producer in the mister clean R T Baker mould, not my favourite choice but probably did alright by Boomtown Rats, Rumour, Michael Stanley, Clover — horrible records though. Were the band accepting second best?

"Not at all. Mutt has helped us with arrangements. Where we tended to be sloppy, undisciplined, just bang down the song and leave it, he's fleshed out the structures, made more of the hooks. Which is what you want from a producer: an objective voice who understands your material but can distance himself. We had some fights — one lyric he disliked, said it was too boppy for the American market, we kept it." Pity that they can't keep a reference to Coca Cola in 'Teenerama', one of their most dazzling insights into adolescent rock sexuality.

IT WOULD BE difficult for any producer to dissipate what this band has, but the album and new 45 'Rock'n'Roll Love Letter' must swagger where the first single knocked politely. Wicks explains that modest entry as "getting in there quietly, giving ourselves time to develop without subjecting ourselves to pressures we don't need. I don't see how a band like Siouxsie and The Banshees can possibly develop naturally now, they're in so many corners they can't satisfy anyone.

"It's good for us that anything goes again though. Pop music was completely unfashionable when heavy rock was peaking — now that's been reversed. We cross the gap."

Birch is less certain where The Records' vibration first oscillates. "The style is in my head. If I analyse the method we get to labels and everyone has different interpretations. I like to think we go deeper than the pure pop thing — I know we do. I know we've got ten great songs, bang bang bang.

"But writing songs is bloody difficult. Sometimes I think, 'Christ, we've signed this contract for four albums and that's about fifty songs. Where are they gonna come from?'

"I dunno where a following starts. You can duplicate what's in vogue, be copyists. We're trend settin' — there's no bands in England developing this style. I doubt if any other bands even know what we're trying to do."

Gower interprets the sound as "the best music young white boys can naturally make. The dilemma of any white English rocker is that the form came from black America. On the other side you get white punks on dope, the jet age sound, The Byrds."

Birch narrows his eyes and tosses in a cutting refrain. "Look at all the bands trying to be Steely Dan. What's the point? Steely Dan are the best group in the world. So why put on a Cafe Jacques album when you've got the real thing? You might say, what's the point in getting the feeling of Dwight Twilley? There's a very big point: no one's ever heard him and they should have.

"It's not that academic rock thing, that collecting preoccupation, frustrated musicians comparing matrix numbers and the size Ahmet Ertegun takes in shoes. I used to be in that scene when I didn't have a good band, but this is idealism in practise. It goes beyond commonsense. I like four-piece bands — Beatles, Swinging Blue Jeans, Buzzcocks.

"We could have a fantastic singer who got his picture in the papers, with our songs that would be very easy. We prefer to make it harder. It's a collective ideal."

THE DEBUT album is scheduled for May release. Before that the single 'Rock and Roll Love Letter' (The Scratch Band have pipped them on this one) b/w 'Wives And Mothers Of Tomorrow' (a moving synopsis of the dating/mating/dancing game, a courtly love song in the vein of middle Kinks) should whet the appetite.

The album will come in a gatefold sleeve with an additional carat in the shape of a free 12" four-track of The Records playing some favourites, at least a couple of which are psychedelic classics that define the entire oeuvre (be a shame to spoil the surprise though).

Maybe anyone who attempts such a revisionist indulgence, or even admits to a liking for '60s styles, is looked upon as a retard, an acid casuality or a tedious old fool with one foot in the grave and the other in the bankruptcy court. Maybe.

The Records are alive and well and ready to rock. They might well be the first post-new wave band to have assimilated their roots without letting them show — the essential difference between them and The Pleasers or their ilk, all of whom were as authentic as *Hair*.

'Up All Night', 'Insomnia', 'Affection Rejected', 'All Messed Up And Ready To Go', these songs are part of the modern soundtrack.

An impossible mission? I don't think so. The Records' kick is as hard as their seduction is soft. Their music reaches the head round about the same time as it says hello to the feet and all the bits in between. Music for dancing, music for singing, for loving and fighting.

They aren't iconoclasts. Come the last days of May and these truths will be self-evident.

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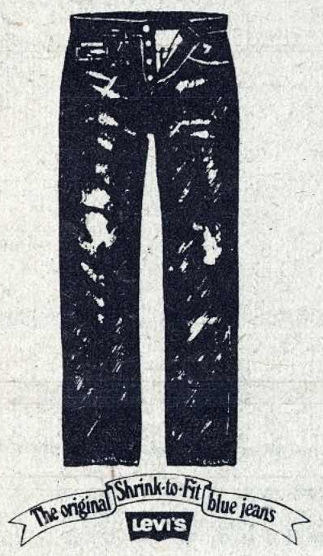

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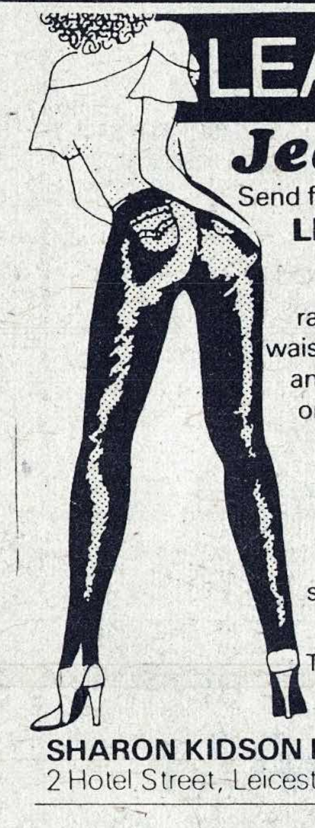

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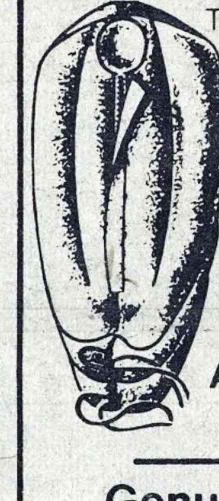

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Brother Sledge hammers 'em

Percy Sledge
The Venue

Short of a Resurrection Special starring Otis Redding, a Percy Sledge gig should, judging from what I overhear around these parts, be a rock writer's dream 'soul' concert.

Most white British music scribes who currently berate black America retain an affection for Percy if only because of 'When A Man Loves A Woman'. Sad then, for so many of them, that the affection wasn't strong enough to drive their bodies to The Venue last Friday. They missed a dream come true.

Admittedly I was apprehensive about the gig myself.

Although he is one of the finest southern-soul wailers of all time, Percy's success in the late '60s was largely dependent on producers Quin Ivy and Marlin Greene, the cream of Muscle Shoals session musicians and steady input of good songs from sympathetic writers.

He has never written anything, nor does he play an instrument; he's simply a stand-up singer. Furthermore, I remembered his only other public performance in London back in '67 was disappointing.

So without his old studio accompanists or any recent hits, it seemed highly likely that Percy would stumble through a ten minute medley of his oldies and an hour of other people's disco hits, all made even worse by a ham-fisted pick-up band.

Not only were the British musicians Side Effect commendably competent (if inappropriately equipped) but disco-fever obviously hasn't yet wiped out Alabama. Conceding nothing to the International Boogie Machine — unless you count those perennial stompers 'Midnight Hour' and 'Knock On Wood', which he performed closer to the '69 originals than to modern arrangements anyway — Percy sang seven of his slowest hits and three other ballads — 'My Girl', 'Easy' and 'Brandy'.

Uncommitted observers may have thought his performance a bit dreary, since he has no act to speak of and avoids the usual audience-participation cliches. Apart from an engaging grin and stock one-liner between each song his *soul* asset (geddit?) is his voice. But *what* a voice!

By the second song 'My Special Prayer' it was clear that he was still as majestically sanctified as ever, and as he and the band settled into a workable relationship he relaxed into spine-tingling southern soul with 'Cover Me', 'Warm And Tender Love', 'Take Time To Know Her' and superlative versions of 'Out Of Left Field' and 'It Tears Me Up'.

Throughout, the sound was balanced in favour of the band, but not so much that Percy was swamped. And 'When A Man Loves A Woman' received a standing ovation and another historic name had justified his reputation.

The weekend was an anti-climax.

Cliff White

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ON THE TOWN EXTRA

Red Crayola Scritti Politti

Nottingham

Both Red Crayola and Scritti Politti appear to approach their work with enthusiasm and investigative commitment, and are to be applauded as such.

Neither, I'd imagine, would be caught saying silly things like "And isn't that what rock'n'roll is supposed to be all about?"; and they've both got the product to prove their point, 'Wives In Orbit' and 'Skank Bloc Bologna' being a couple of last year's more successful — and listenable — attempts to shed new light on the shadowy assumptions of "good ol' rock'n'roll".

Theirs is a *truly* revolutionary impulse which, rather than using the medium merely to trundle out predetermined polemic, sees its obligation more in terms of giving the wheels a complete overhaul and, if necessary, replacing them.

Never mind the bathwater, let's get rid of the baby!

An ambitious task, yes; and this, the first date of a tour the very existence of which is something of an achievement, can best be viewed as an index of failure, a ratio of intention to actuality. Not surprisingly, both outfits have quite some way to go before getting close to that perfect, unattainable one-to-one.

But then, nothing's worth doing unless it's impossible, eh?

Scritti Politti were ragged and tentative, obviously unsure of themselves, but brave enough to ignore 'Skank Bloc Bologna' in favour of more recent material. The Red Crayola were more 'professional', more *able*, obviously better equipped to deal with the purely technical side of things. But the similarity of both bands' material was disappointing; as if they'd decided on their prospective tools and forms and settled into a 'style', so reducing the horizons of their ambition: satisfaction breeding inaction.

Which is not to say the styles aren't (to a point) enjoyable and interesting.

Scritti Politti's use of reggae, for example, is one of the few instances of that form being *adapted* rather than just *applied* by white musicians. And the fussy percussive flurries, stilted bass lines and insistent guitar syncopation combine to produce a peculiar nervous jerkiness, a discomfiting tension between hesitancy and forcefulness. They were justifiably well-received by those who came to listen, despite the indecipherability of most of their lyrics.

Red Crayola's unusual line-up of guitar, drums and sax (organ replacing guitar for one song) is interesting to begin with, but eventually imposes too great a restriction, and the textural possibilities are exhausted halfway through the set.

Nonetheless, the hollowness of their sound occasionally makes for fascinating listening and, like Scritti Politti, there's an odd tension to the music — the result of setting Jesse Chamberlain's frenetic drumming and Mayo Thompson's jarring, angular guitar against the dry, rather expressionless sax of Lora Logic.

The strengths of their approach were demonstrated on the almost unrecognisable version of 'Hurricane Fighter Plane' they included (the old in the new light, fresh and fearless); the weaknesses painfully evident on the diabolical reading of 'In The Midnight Hour' which surfaced messy, half-formed and unnecessary, as an encore.

Still, I may be rather hyper-critical about things: the tour is undoubtedly the most speculative enterprise of its kind in ages, and also the most enjoyable and thought-provoking I've seen so far in '79; one deserving more than merely open-handed praise.

If you missed it, kick yourself.

Andy Gill

Gloria Gaynor

Palladium

Until her recent smash Gloria Gaynor was as good as dead and buried.

Although I've always been fond of her work, one new song cannot prop up a 1975 revue. Since her Paladium gigs I've had folk viewing me with stares normally reserved for poolswinners who forgot to post the coupon when I said I thought the show was OK.

True, there can be no excuse for booking a catsuited comic to tell gags about wives and bidets, nor for forcing us to sit through a female duo paying homage to Streisand but, if we ignore the six notes a seat price, it would have been daft to expect more from a show by such shaky stars. She gave us a brief skit, all fast 'Disco' ('Never Can Say Goodbye', 'Casanova Brown') barring a single ballad, and then came the wind up intro to the BIG SHOWSTOPPER!

For what it's worth, the pause between the casual opening to 'I Will Survive' and the flash of the real business was a magic moment. The predominantly female audience were shaking down the aisles too, and continued to cheer after the houselights went on.

But it was an expensive affair. So I'm sorry Glor, despite your panting between songs and 'sexy' knockabouts with Amos and Andy, there's little in your cupboard to make us forget we had to miss an excellent edition of *Top Of The Pops* that night.

Danny Baker

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R.I.P. The Exhumed.

WHO KNOWS Where the time goes? Sadly missed. John, Wales.

FAN CLUBS 16p per word

BILLY COBHAM Appreciation Society (Official) sae G. Jackson, 74 Ethelstan Cres, Newton Farm, Hereford. For details.

GENESIS OFFICIAL Fan Club send sae to Geoff Parkyn, Genesis Information, P.O. Box 107, London. N6 5RU.

LENA ZAVARONI Fan Club, sae 20 Silfield Road, Wymondham, Norfolk. NR18 9AY.

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ROCKY HORROR Official International Fan Club sae Tim, 1 Chapman Ave, Maidstone, Kent.

THE PIRANHAS Fan Club. sae Sue Horne, 24 Dyke Road, Brighton, Sussex.

THE WORLDWIDE Roger LaVern (ZANDO) Appreciation Society, Secretary, Chris Saunders, 196 Ferme Park Road, London, N.8.

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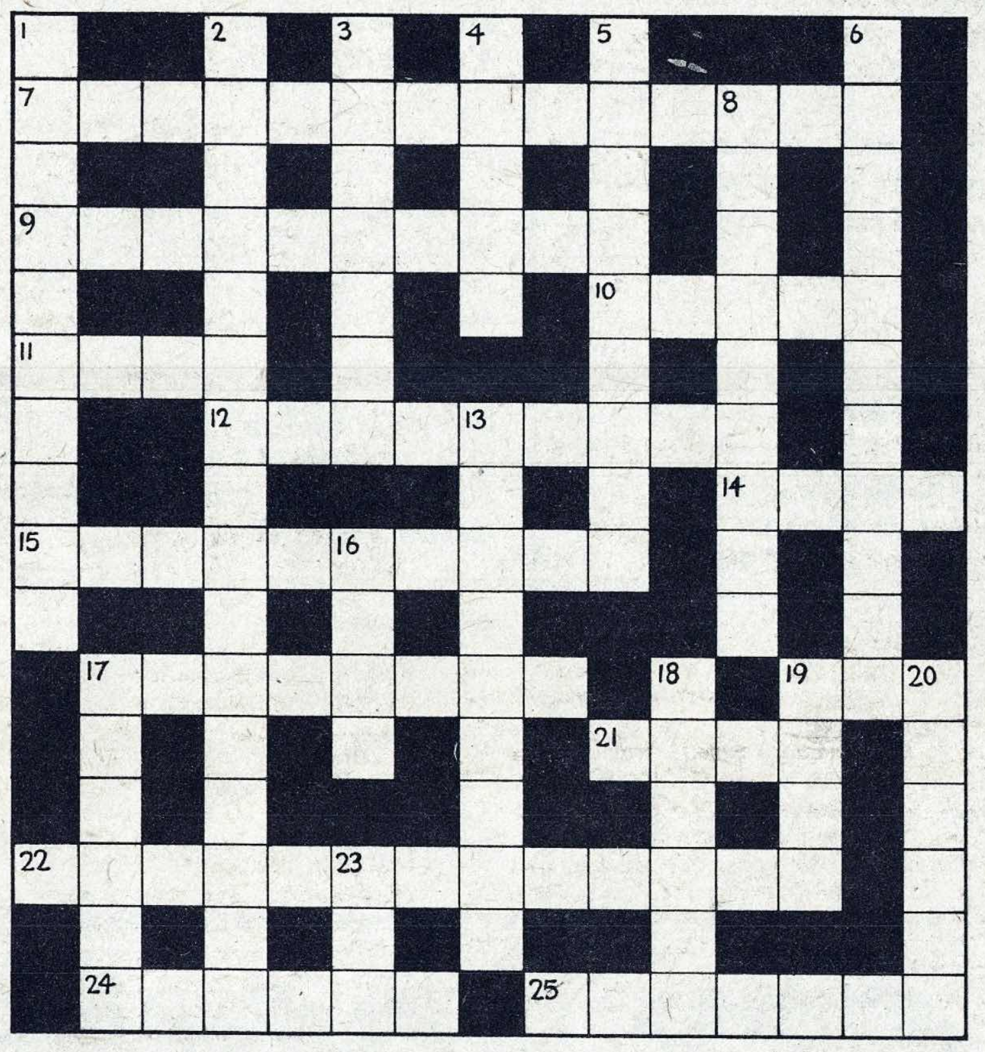

ACROSS

7 Last David Essex hit: Hungary is hungry (gulp) and the people are broke etc. (8, 6)
9 Chronologically came between the Twist and the Turkey Trot, celebrated on the 1962 hit of the same name by Little Eva.
10 Surname of the Peter in Peter and Gordon.
11 Soul lady involved in a concertina finale!
12 Heard the one about the Frogs, Sprouts, Clogs and Krauts?! (3, 6)
14 Not Noel but the Russell geezer!
15 American music centre famous for its R&B and such artists as Allen Toussaint, Dr. John, and Lee Dorsey. (3, 7)
17 U.S. rock outfit with particular appeal to those of the fuller figure. (4, 4)
19 Turner ex of Wishbone Ash.
21 Sax played a lot!
22 Grey-haired TV producer of Supersonic notoriety: cue dry ice, cue lightning storm, cue holocaust, etc. (4, 9)
24 Remove the blood from "It's My Party" hitmaker!
25 See 13.

DOWN

1 Another '70s classic from the team which brought you "Friggin' In The Rigging". (5, 5)
2 Wow those macho boys sure know how to pick a powerful title: this is Bad Company's latest blood'n'guts party piece. (10, 6)
3 The original was by Ms Wynette, the cover by Mr Connolly.
4 He lives in a roundabout way!
5 Sometimes it rains soda, but not when she's about! (5, 4)
6 Tangerine Dreamer with solo pretentions. (5, 6)
8 Loony mastermind behind L.A. hippie cult band Love. (6, 3)
13 and 25 Tom Robinson's getting things organised, or is it something more sinister? (2, 7, 3, 4)
16 The Who got inspired by her dirty pictures!
17 Otis Redding soul classic also recorded by The Temptations (2, 4)
18 With which to dress your record arm?!
19 Wizard and True Star found next to D. D. Ramone!
20 '73 Elton John hit about a mate of his hopping off to Spain.
23 They had their 15 minutes of fame with "How Long".

ANSWERS TO LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD

ACROSS: 1 "C'est Chic"; 4 (Dave) Mason; 7 "Reason To Believe"; 10 "Framed"; 11 "Fire"; 13 Sister Sledge; 14 Hit; 15 "(Shake Your) Body"; 16 "At The Hop"; 18 (Jan &) Dean; 19 Freddie Cannon; 22 Chieftains; 23 (Nicky) Tesco.

DOWN: 1 Christine Perfect; 2 "Scared To Dance"; 5 Stiff (Little Fingers); 6 "Never Mind The (Bollocks)"; 8 "That'll Be The Day"; 9 & 12 Brenda Lee; 15 "(Never Mind The) Bollocks"; 17 Pianist; 20 Dee; 21 RSO.

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(NME3)

I served aboard. . .

The Bag that died of Shame

Confesses abject TINY TOLER, USN, NME (ret'd)

You bastards! I *told* you *not* to print this!
Roger One-Ball.
Yes, I know. I'm sorry but the trouble is, yours is the only letter in the Bag so far. First post, that is. No, wait — here comes another. Let's take a look. (Rip, tear, grab, fumble.) Hmmmmm. A bit terse. It'll have to do. — TT.

Germany is the shits for music.
BAZZ, Runderoth, Germany.
Now what? Wait, I've got an idea. — T.T.

Sitting as I do opposite you at the same desk, it has just been brought to my attention that the Bag is short of letters this week and therefore desperately needs to pad out. This enables me to take this opportunity of venting a favourite topic of mine.
MONTY SMITH, Carnaby St., London W.1.

Sorry Monty, but I've just found this one that got stuck under the mat. I'll come back to you — T.T.

Last week's cartoon by me was a decrepit old thing that you must have mislaid since the war or something. The week before there was a mistake in the caption which rendered the whole thing pointless.

Let's see you fuck this letter up somehow.
RAY LOWRY, Manchester.

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RAY LOWRY, Manchester.

Further to my brutally curtailed letter of two minutes ago, I'd just like to say that, pushed for mail though you be, the sort of stunt we have just witnessed is just not allowable under the conventions.
MONTY SMITH, Carnaby St., W.1.

What conventions would they be, then? — T.T.

The conventions to which I refer
MONTY SMITH, Carnaby St., W.1.
Sorree, second post has just arrived. Yes, here's one. I tell you, I'm really beginning to appreciate *bona fide* letters.

If Jimmy Pursey doesn't like violence, why does he play 'Land of Hope and Glory' before his concerts?
A PUNK PUMMELLED BY THE SHAM ARMY, somewhere.
Good question. I imagine he plays this tune for its notorious soporific effect. Do you remember your Keats? *Music hath charms to soothe the savage nurd.* Right. Back to you, Monty. — T.T.

I've forgotten what I was going to say.
MONTY SMITH, Carnaby St., W.1.
Something about your favourite topic. That wouldn't be Gillingham by any chance, would it? Feel free of course. — T.T.

What's wrong with Gillingham?
MONTY SMITH, Carnaby St., London W.1.
Nothing, nothing, It's just that there's something about the name itself that makes me laugh. Gillingham. *Gill-ing-ham.* No, it's no good. I'll never be able to take the word seriously. What is Gillingham, by the way? No, sorry, please continue. — T.T.

I'm —
MONTY SMITH, Carnaby St., W.1.
Hold on. Where did this postcard come from? Oh, did it? I suppose that's one problem with turnups. Never mind. Roll it out. — T.T.

These letters are enough to make anyone feel pissed off.
DEBBIE NIGHTSHADE, New Malden, Surrey.

Especially me.
NEIL SPENCER, Editor, NME, Carnaby St., W.1.
You want to try editing a letters page with no letters. I asked for a half-page ad but did you listen? Wait till the later posts, you said. Fat lot of good that did me. If it hadn't been for Monty here we'd be in desperate trouble. As it is I know it's unsatisfactory but it's not my fault. — T.T.

If you'd let me get into my stride about Gillingham you wouldn't be in this mess.
MONTY SMITH, Carnaby St., W.1.

Rather than that, you can have your half page ad.
NEIL SPENCER, Editor, NME, Carnaby St., W.1.

Someone's just told me you're a bit short of letters this week. I've had this one for a few weeks now. Don't know if it's any use but you're welcome.
ROY CARR, Carnaby St., W.1.

I hate having my letters put at the foot of the page.
BORIS THE SPIDER, somewhere.
Well, I will say it's no worse than the rest. Monty? — T.T.

You mean it?
MONTY SMITH, Carnaby St., W.1.
I mean it. — T.T.

I can really talk about Gillingham?
MONTY SMITH, Carnaby St., W.1.
You can. — T.T.

No pissing about?
MONTY SMITH, Carnaby St., W.1.
None. —T.T.

No last-minute discoveries, no interruptions?
MONTY SMITH, Carnaby St., W.1.
None. You may talk about Gillingham, wherever or whatever that may be, to your heart's content. Starting now. — T.T.

NOW HEAR THIS!

For some reason — most likely the short working week — not enough letters of printable quality arrived at GASBAG, NME, 5-7 Carnaby St., W1 this week. We've been saved from worse than embarassment by the ad below. Watch it!

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And Woolco

Sometime!

HOME, HOME ON THE

T-ZERS

LET'S get one thing straight. This first post-Easter morning, the dots are *not* ill. They are not queasy. They are not hungover, sickly or even slightly unhealthy. It's just that if anyone mentions choclate, eggs, traffic, Margaret Thatcher or bloody horrid little bunnies with perky tails and flopsy ears within earshot of a dot, then boy would we not want to have to pay the dry-cleaning bills!

We've seen 88 dumb sitcoms, 23 bad movies and at least 50 completely untrustworthy politicians (whoever you vote for, a government still gets in) and it's a relief to get back to the clean, healthy, swingin', teenage, funpacked, light-hearted world of POP MUSIC. So let's dip a greasy hand into the T-Zerz bag and see what kind of clean-cut, bright-eyed little itemlet we come up with first . . .

And the winner is **Elvis** "I am mot a racist" **Costello**, following in the footsteps of **Rod** "I only wrote the lyrics" **Stewart** and **Richard** "I am not a crook" **Nixon**, caught in a candid pose as the press conference held to clear up the nasty mess caused by the injudicious remarks made in the heat of the moment during the now legendary/notorious/boring brawl with the massed steel noses of the **Stephen Stills** clique. Through the magic of Sensurround, we take you now to the CBS building where Elvis is just about to explain, "It became necessary for me to outrage these people with the most obnoxious and offensive remarks that I could muster to bring the argument to a swift conclusion and rid myself of their presence. It worked pretty good: It started a fight."

The assorted American journalists present didn't quite understand the point that cheeky, lovable El, 24, was attempting to make and so the argument raged back and forth until it was finally made clear that Elvis was not insulting **Ray Charles** and **James Brown** becuase he was a racist or didn't like their music: he was insulting them because he wanted to annoy Stephen Stills and **Bonnie Bramlett** and that under different circumstances, he himself would be offended if somebody said those same things to him and actually *meant* them. While we dots are basically in favour of most things that get Stephen Stills uptight, we must remember that the Yanks aren't as familiar with Costello's little foibles as we are and that they're not as likely to indulge his waggish ways as his old pals at home are. Still, it's all water under the bridge and the legend grows *(What an asshole — Ed)* . . .

Meanwhile, back at **The Boomtown Rats** (and we're deviating from our policy of neglecting and ignoring our favourite showband just to bring you this cute little item), we are told of a recent occasion wherein **Modest Bob** was noshing away in a San Diego restaurant blarneying everyone within earshot to death with his customary wit, verve, aplomb and bullshit when — snerk! — a turkey bone stuck in the legendary throat. Panic! Choking on a bone is a serious t'ing (folks have been known to snuff under such conditions) and as Dublin's pride lay floundering and gasping a nearby lady began to administer the last rites (as if Geldof needed 'em) and the manager faced a crisis of conscience as to whether to hit Bob to dislodge the offending particle. Luckily, Dublin's pride survived but we are informed that while the lanky one was turning blue, a ghastly vision of the recent *NME* headline "RATS TURKEY OUT IN AMERICA" floated before his eyes. That's nothing to the one we'd've written if the bone had stuck, B.G. . . .

We are famous for being fair and impartial, so we wouldn't dream of suggesting that The Boomtown Rats look a complete and utter bunch of idiots in the picture above. However, if YOU think the Rats look a complete and utter etc there is a coupon at the foot of this page you may care to fill in. *Pic: Fin Costello.*

Here's an old favourite that's always good for a snappy para: **Public Image Ltd** are proud (and a little humble, natcho) to announce their New Drummer, **Dave Humphrey** from Hackney, described by world's most permanently seated bassist **Jah Wobble** as "shit hot, into that jazzfunk **Miles Davis** thing." PiL have also been busybusybusy in Jah Studio cutting their new elpee, with a soon-come single which is a — you should pardon the expression — MODERN version of **Tchaikovsky's** *Swan Lake* (not **Bram,** t'other fella) with a particularly spectacular vocal from PiL's vocalist (the name slips our mind). These people are obviously unfamiliar with 'Saturday Night At The Duck Pond' the 1960 instrumental version of the same chune by **The Flee-Rekkers.**
Come to think of it, so are we, but we'd like to welcome The Flee-Rekkers back to *T-Zerz* anyway . . .

An irate **Eugene Reynolds** *(Is there any other kind? — Ed)* phoned the dots to venth is spleen over the newly released posthumous live **Rezillos** album *(Jolly messy it was too —* **Perverted Ed who likes playing his Ramones** *cassettes at the printers).* "As far as we're concerned," ranged Euge, "It's got nothing to do with The Rezillos. It's just hammering the nails into the coffin." He was most irked that he and lithesome danseuse **Fay Fife** were given very little say in the production of the record. They are disgruntled the mix, the cover art and the title, but are moderately gruntled by the fact that it has a first side and a second side, and that both of these have a run-off groove at the end. Futhermore, Eugene claims that he spent a fortnight trying to alter the cover art, but that no-one from Sire would answer the telephone . . .

Our men leaning on the Release stall yelling "Get 'em off, boiler" at passing women inform us that **Jimmy Pursey** played a brief impromptu set at the Rock Against Racism Ally Pally gig on Sunday. Jim was backed by a motley crew including **Tony James** and **Derwood of Glen X**. And James and **Stiff Little Fingers' Jake Burns** played on **Tom Robinson's** entire set, while Sgt. **Alex Harvey** joined Tom's **Howling Commandos** for a quick canter through **Bob Marley's** 'Small Axe'. **Barry Ford** and loads of other musical friends also helped out, and the show was stolen by **Asward** and **The Ruts**. The sound was variously described as 'dreadful', 'appalling' and 'blaaaarrrrgghhh' but it was a great gig, a wonderful time was had by all and the tour didn't lose *that* much money . . .

At recent **Beach Boys** gigs in New York, **Mike Love** actually apologised to the audience before the band played their new disco number, 'Here Comes The Night'. This new cultural triumph took six months and £33,000 to record. Was it worth it, we ask? According to them as has heared it, it certainly wasn't . .

Hot Rods' bassist **Paul Gray** not crying in his beer (or whatever it is that the wasted-looking little bleeder drinks these days) over his band's possible split from Island Records. Fab Paul, 18, has become an honorary **Member** for the duration of the suburban boys' upcoming tour, depping for the indisposed (that's what he says- **Chris Payne** . . .

Top people's publicist **Tony Brainsby** no longer in receipt of a £150 a week from **The Clash**. Nevertheless, he still represents **Wings, Judas Priest** and hordes of other important people. . .

Okay, take one-chew-t'ree-faw: **T. Erdelyi** (still better known as *Tommy Ramone*) in London to produce **The Dazzlers** for Charisma Records. Wha' hoppen with **Da Brudders'** live album, Tommy? . . .

Ryland P. Cooder, ethnomusicologist supreme, currently working on an R&B album. The dots have already cleaned out their ears in readiness . . .

Now it can be told: **James Paul McCartney** — the real threat to our nation's diabetics — wanted to put **Sid Vicious** straight *(I didn't even know he was queer — Ed).* In an upcoming *Rolling Stone* interview with **Paul Gambaccinininininini** *(Stop that — Ed),* Fab Macca reveals that he wanted to have a chat with the late Sid in the hope that it would have sorted the lad out. So, we ask, why did this epoch-making heart-to-heart never take place? Well, we reply, it was because Paul felt that Sid might've told him where to go (faint strains of 'Mull of Kintyre' in background, slow dissolve to record counter at Campbeltown Woolworths, etc) . . .

God has not been good to this country since the North Americanos crossed the Rio Grande, senor: the *Mexico City News* reports that the newest rock idol over there is one **Vomito Sanchez**. They commented, "This isn't his real name, but it does give something of the essence of the man." Wait, there's more: "Vomito's programme consists of groups like **Howling Bowl And The Colons, Sweaty Ned And The Dribbling Jimmies** — likewise not real names, but essential ones." Just what in the name of Heck, asks a passing **John Wayne,** is going on over there? . . .

This one'll kill ya: discussions are under way for **Neil Diamond** and **Barbra Streisand** to co-star in a fillum with music by the **Bee Gees.** The dots are already curled up in a sleeping bag outside the Empire Leicester Square . . .

And finally, we leave you with whacky ol' **Bob Dylan** (okay, how many of you *did* suss the schnook?). Not content with co-opting **Mark Knopfler** and **Pick Withers** from **Dire Straits** to play on his next elpee (soon to make 'em the **Mike Bloomfield** and **Al Kooper** of the '80s), the Zim has allegedly (a) fired his band, (b) cancelled his upcoming tour, and (c) gotten baptised in **Pat Boone's** back yard. Just as well the old coot doesn't live over here, 'cuz he'd probably end up voting Tory . . .

EDITORIAL DISCLAIMER: none of the remarks in the above column are intended to jeopardise the General Election. We have no intention whatsoever of attempting to dissuade anybody at all from voting Conservative. We welcome the idea of increased police powers, anti-union legislation, increased unemployment, media restrictions and . . . well, *hello,* Inspector! We didn't see you come in, but can we be of assistance to you?

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that The Boomtown idiots look a complete and utter bunch of rats in this week's T-Zers picture.

____

To: The Boomtown Idiots, Ensign Records, 44 Seymour Place, London W1.

Editorial disclaimer: The coupon and picture on this page do not represent a B. Ratlash.

BETTER BADGES

TOP TEN

This week		Last week
1.	Clash Police	(1)
2.	Stiff Little Fingers	(2)
3.	Jam (red)	(8)
4.	Great Rock & Roll Swindle	(—)
5.	Skids	(3)
6.	Members	(7)
7.	Jam (All Mod Cons)	(—)
8.	Jam Tube Station	(9)
9.	Siouxsie	(—)
10.	Mekons	(10)

NEW RELEASES **25p**: Destroy All Monsters, D.O.A., The Pretenders, T.V. Personalities, Dodgers, Bette Bright, The Fall. 20p Scars, Stiff Little Fingers, Nicky and the Dots, Teen Beats, Throbbing Gristle, ATV Vibing, Les Feles.

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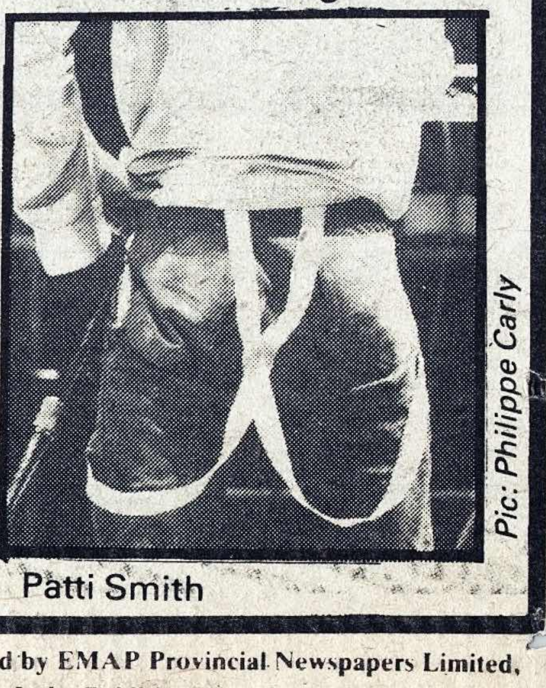
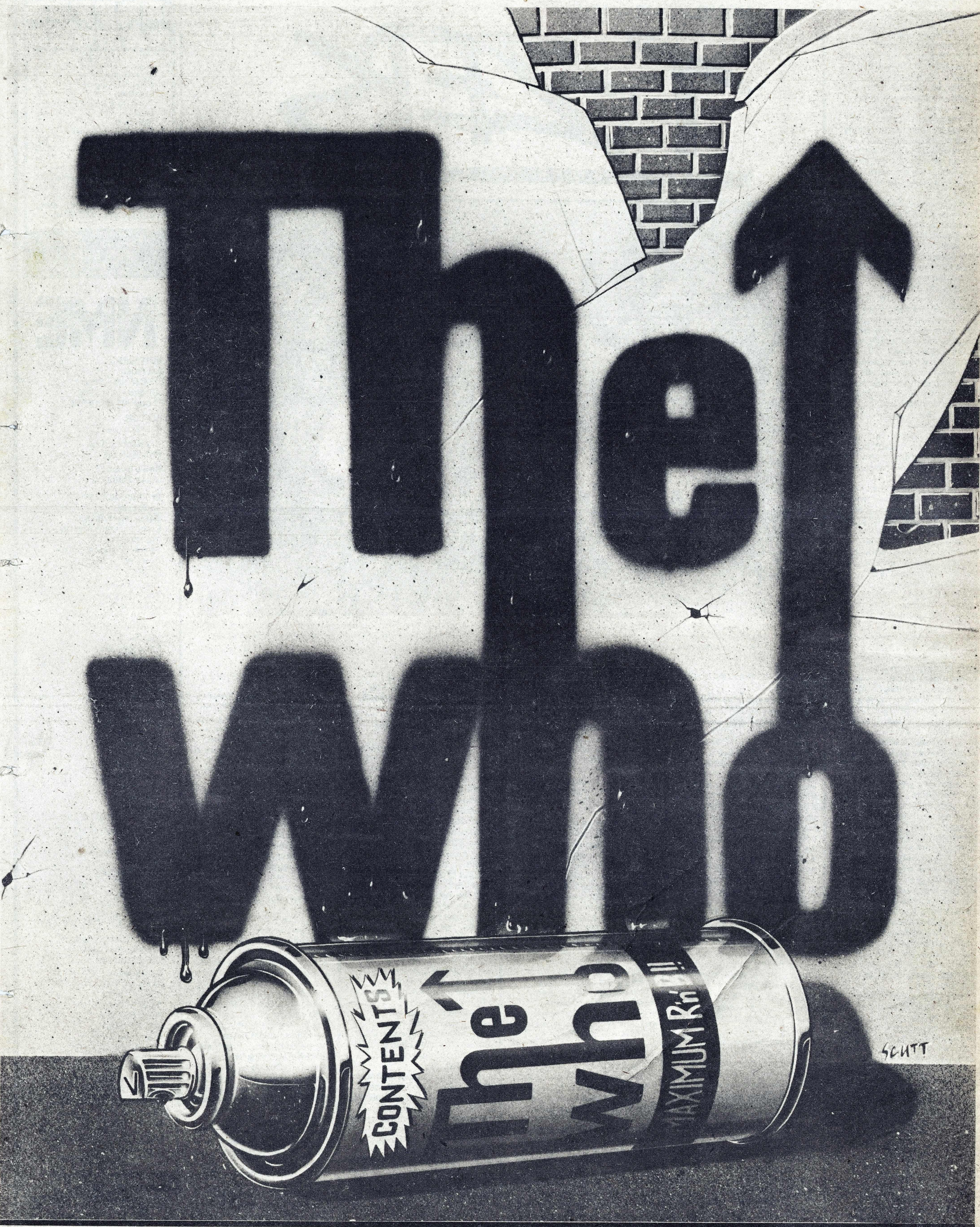


Pic: Philippe Carly

Patti Smith

Published by IPC Magazines Limited, Kings Reach Tower, Stamford Street, London SE1 9LS, at the recommended maximum price shown on the cover. Editorial and Advertisement Offices: Kings Reach, Stamford St., SE1. Printed in England by EMAP Provincial Newspapers Limited, Kettering, Northants. T.U. Registered at the GPO as a newspaper. Sole Agents, Australia and New Zealand, Gordon & Gotch (Asia) Ltd., South Africa, Central News Agency Ltd., East Africa, Stationery and Office Supplies Ltd., Publishers.



'LONG LIVE ROCK' A NEW SINGLE b/w 'MY WIFE' & 'I'M THE FACE'*

'long live rock' is taken from the forthcoming film *The Kids Are Alright*

Polydor

*Originally recorded when The Who were the High Numbers-a rare collectors item.